

JUANITA

AND

OTHER SKETCHES

JENNIE L. HOPKINS.

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If thou art borrowed by a friend,
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To read, to study, not to lend,
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JUANITA

AND

OTHER SKETCHES

BY

JENNIE L. HOPKINS.



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To
MY YOUNGER SISTERS,
FROM WHOSE BRIGHT YOUNG LIVES
I HAVE
DRAWN MUCH COURAGE AND INSPIRATION,
THESE SIMPLE SKETCHES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



PUBLISHED BY SUBSCRIPTION.



PREFACE.

Realizing fully how tame and colorless these little sketches may seem, in comparison with all the gorgeous inventive plot, and infinite variety of the elaborate literary frippery of our day, I am yet bold enough to throw my precious nurselings on the mercy of the public, hoping there are some among you, who may feel their simple, homely worth, as I have felt it in their creation.

J. L. H.

DENVER, MAY 1ST., 1884.

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JUANITA.

JUANITA.



AN LUIS Valley lay burning in the sun one day—one very warm day in midsummer, when there was scarcely air enough anywhere to show that anything lived; not a leaf or twig of the scant low verdure was stirring, and there was a white hazy torpor over everything, that paralyzed effort, and made existence almost a burden. Away out at the edge of the world, a blue rim of mountains lifted their hazy peaks Heavenward, actually clothed with snow-drifts, in seeming invitation to mortals to go thence and enjoy their grateful coolness. Snow-drifts in midsummer! Ah! how delicious they looked

to Juanita, as she wearily urged her lazy mule through the valley that August afternoon, when everything was at white heat, and she was so tired and unhappy:

Yes, she knew the mountains lay just over there, and that if one ascended high enough he might escape perhaps, one-tenth of the heat away up there among the shadows of the great rocks, but Juanita knew also, how tedious was that trail, and how much exertion must be put forth to urge her lazy beast up that tortuous path, for Jack was essentially a Mexican mule, both by birth and education, and was not particularly anxious to distinguish himself by deeds of daring. Juanita had early preferred him to the burros, when her father had decided to put her in charge of that great vicious herd of cattle some two years since, and somehow, she had never had so good a friend in all the world as

Jack was. Certainly he was lazy, but Juanita was that herself; he objected to water otherwise than for drinking purposes, and when the American groom had insisted on giving him a washing once when she had gone with a bunch of cattle to Las Vegas, Juanita had only laughed at His Muleship's resistance, and stared quite as blankly as Jack had done, when the groom had assurance enough to propose that she should go down to those famous baths, and immerse her pretty hands and face just for beauty's sake. You see Jack and Juanita had a good deal in common, and I don't believe the girl ever thought for an instant of chiding the mule for his little misdeeds.

Ned Hewitt, the young New York artist who was camping out in the valley, said the mule had a good face, and Juanita always imagined that Jack smiled when she came near, and when

she laid her dark pretty face against his nose, he always stood quite still, not even blinking in the hot sun, although that may have been a direct result of Jack's disinclination to move under any circumstance, but Juanita chose to believe it was because he loved her, and perhaps, after all, that may have been the reason, for Jack had never had anyone else to love him, and what was worse, neither had Juanita.

Even on such a heated day as this, Hewitt thought, one could scarcely be indifferent enough, not to pity a bright young thing like this, who had nobody in the whole world to care for her—one might easily imagine such a state of things existing in the life of a mule, but a girl for whom no one cared? A girl with a form like a wood nymph, and a pair of eyes, dark and lovely enough to have ravished a prince? A girl in the very bloom of her glow-

ing youth, living away out here in this lonely valley, with only a poor dumb mule for a companion? Ah! surely it was hard enough, but was it any worse than the hot-house lives the girls of his own fashionable set led in New York? Was it any worse, pray, than the weary hollow life Miss Fanny Gray, his fiancée, was leading now, in one of those hot, crowded watering-places on the Atlantic coast? He knew she was dancing, flirting, wearing herself out, body and soul. Did he care? Possibly. He knew he should go home in the autumn to chide her for looking so thin and pale; for being so listless, and taking no kind of interest in anything whatever, himself included. It had been so for the last two Autumns. Their quarrel on this score would not be very serious. Serious things were not in the habit of happening to Ned Hewitt. He was rich, young and

handsome, with a pretty taste for painting, and had never passed a sleepless night in his life.

He was lying under a blanket beneath the shade of a great yellow umbrella; it was too warm to work to-day, he had remarked to Juanita a half hour since when he had invited her to share his hastily improvised tent; he was very sleepy too, but somehow when that vision of Fanny Gray, dancing and flirting at Newport, came into his mind, Juanita cannot be said to have suffered much by the comparison, even though she lived alone in a desert with a dumb animal and a grade of human beings who were much less to her than it was.

A half-formed desire to congratulate Juanita on her glowing health and freedom from all the restrictions of society, flitted through Hewitt's mind, but he was not serious enough to put so earnest a thought into words;—who among us

all, would ever think seriously if circumstances did not demand it? Who cares to shoulder burdens unless necessity compels him to do so, and necessity had never compelled Ned Hewitt to do anything. Nature had given him a very pretty talent for painting, and though he had never really exerted himself, he had finished some very pleasing pieces for his friends, and had come here a year ago with a sort of indefinite consciousness that he was a little weary of society, and that possibly he might work up something in picturesque Colorado, that would gain him admission to the Academy of Design. This was his one ambition in life, although, of course, there was Miss Fanny Gray always fluttering somewhere in the back-ground in silken draperies, but she had never expressed much interest in his work, and it was not for her sake he desired admittance to the famous school;

he wanted a membership for reasons of his own; if admission depended on great effort, however, he had small prospect of ever attaining it, and he owned this laughingly to himself, but to use his own mental expression it would be a devilish fine thing to live with geniuses at the clubs, to smoke long pipes, and tell long stories over great foaming mugs of ale, all those jolly nights, of which he had as yet seen but a glimpse.

Juanita was eyeing him curiously. How fair he was, with those masses of soft brown hair, and those frank open blue eyes, which reminded her of wild forget-me-nots. How delicate his hands were, with the long taper fingers, and pink shapely nails! She was almost tempted to touch them, to see if they were real. He seemed to her as pink and white as the waxen saints the padre had brought

with him for the chapel, the last time he had been to Denver. How beautiful he was to her! And he was sleeping now, so peacefully there on the hot earth, with only his white hands for a pillow, dreaming that a portrait of Juanita had gained him the longed-for admission to the Academy. In his dream he saw just how she would look when those long, tangled masses of wavy black hair were brushed out, and piled in heavy coils on the back of her head; when jewels sparkled in those tiny ears, and golden snakes coiled themselves on those dusky arms; scarlet and cloth of gold would be her robe; the girl was beautiful enough to make a study for a Spanish princess, and the usually impassive artist was intoxicated at the thought of what she would be on canvas.

And so he had spoken kindly to the girl who sat there with her hands clasped on her knees,

and her eyes filled with a new and intelligent interest. Jack grazed peacefully at her side. Fortunately for him the grass grew so thickly here he did not have to walk three paces during the entire afternoon.

Juanita, looking at him fondly, shrugged her pretty shoulders, and thought of this in her own way. The droll idea that the mule would starve before he would walk a mile in the hot sun for a dinner, brought a half smile into the corners of her mouth, and revealed two rows of teeth like strung pearls. Juanita knew that her father had always despised her for her beauty. Why had she not been a sturdy boy like the others? This was the question he had asked himself and the padre, for the last sixteen years, in fact ever since the girl was born. "A girl is no use at hunting or fishing," old Jose always said, "She can only tell her beads, and go to confessional.

Look at those slim hands and wrists. Do you think they could perform any kind of labor?" And so, neglected by her father and brothers, and ill used by the grim Mexican woman who was her step-mother, the girl spent most of her time roaming through the valley until finally her father put her in charge of a herd of cattle, and so she was never at home any more from sunrise until sunset, and twice a year she went with her father and brothers to the cattle market. This was what Juanita told Hewitt when he awoke, he speaking Spanish quite as badly as she spoke English, but what pair of young people alone with Nature ever failed to understand each other? Hewitt told Juanita it was a burning shame her people should treat her so; told her that in civilization such things were not allowed; told her in thrilling tones of the place his own sisters occupied in the house-

hold; told her how beautiful she was, but strange as it may seem, he did not speak to her of Fanny Gray. I have always thought it a curious phase in the life of an engaged man, that he never speaks of his inamorata to any young and pretty woman, notwithstanding what his confidences may be with elderly family friends, but it does not follow necessarily that this is any indication of unfaithfulness on the lover's part. The truth is, young hearts in the fullness of inexperience and the strong mesmerism of a pair of handsome eyes, are always irresistibly drawn so closely together, that confessions and explanations are out of the question, and doubt not that if many noble but over-sensitive women were to take the naturalness of this silly love-making into charitable account, there would be many more happy marriages, and a great many less broken hearts than there are

in the world. It is a well-known fact that three-fourths of the young men of the present day, have a sweet glance and a loving word for any pretty girl whenever time and place afford, but notwithstanding all this, in most men's hearts there lives a real woman, for whom if put to the test, they would fight in the lists. The trouble is now-a-days they are not put to the test, and so all this foolish meaningless love-making goes on, and sometimes the jealous shafts sink so deep into the real woman's heart, that stung to desperation, she breaks her vows, and so snaps the chords of her love-life asunder for all time. This state of things was as familiar to Ned Hewitt's ideas of civilization, as was the sight of the innumerable pretty girls themselves, but as I said before, he had never done anything in earnest in his whole life, and I am afraid there was no "real woman" living

down in the depths of his naturally kind heart. He had never felt so strongly about anything as he did to-day, and the wish that was father to that serious thought was a selfish desire to paint Juanita's portrait. All that long hot afternoon, while he talked to the girl, he could think of nothing but that portrait in scarlet plush and cloth of gold. Already he fancied himself famous, sought after, admired, the fashion of the hour among the picture-loving people of Fifth Avenue. His glowing imagination even went so far as to picture a scene not unlike that depicted in a work of Fortuney's, which he had seen in a Parisian Salon, where the Academicians, noble old men, in court dress and powdered wigs, come to select a model for the School of Design. Juanita should be the model; her warm Southern beauty should inspire the genius of a great sculptor, who would

chisel an image of the portrait from snow-white marble. The art critics of our own country would have the place in the scene that those grave men hold in the picture,—his painting, the work of his own hand on a rich marble table, with the magnificent wall of the Academy for a back-ground, should take the place of the celebrated statue in Fortune's painting, and he knew that to accomplish all this he had but to make an accurate copy of this wondrously beautiful girl, whom chance had thrown so strangely in his way.

He was exhilarated, elated, triumphant. It was as if he had drunk new wine, and from the first he never doubted his success. Towards evening Juanita sprang upon Jack's back, and riding in and out among her truant herd, was soon threading her way through the valley to her father's ranche, where she and the cattle

always sought shelter for the night.

Hewitt followed behind her at a little distance, and upon arriving at the straggling village, where a dozen adobe huts surrounded a tiny plaza, and a very small chapel of somewhat rude, though superior architecture, lifted its gray walls high above the houses, was interested to see Juanita drive her herd into a rude shed, spring gracefully from Jack's back, give him food and water, and then reappear tripping down the path with a great goat-skin water-jar on her head, from which she had removed her broad straw hat, to make room for it. It was sunset now, and her day's work was done. She might loiter by the spring quite as long as she liked, only returning in time for old Jose and his sons to have a long fresh draught of the sweet mountain water before they sought their dingy blankets, and sleep. The

spring was nearly a quarter of a mile from the house, an unconscionable distance Juanita had always thought it, but to-night Ned Hewitt met her half way down the path, and no walk had ever seemed so short or pleasant.

It was near nine o'clock when they returned and Hewitt accompanied the girl to the brow of the hill, back of which lay her father's house, carrying the water for her, that she might see, he said, how men bore the burdens out in the world, and smiling at the dexterity with which she finally took it from him and swung it lightly to the top of her pretty head. With some difficulty he made her understand that he was a painter; one who made pictures, you know, with a brush, on canvas;—but what did she know of such things? he said to himself. Pshaw! why had he not brought his brush and palette up the hill from the little inn,

that he might have given practical illustrations of his subject? Juanita looked puzzled. A picture—a face—her face? Oh! yes; something like those lovely things the padre had brought from Denver, but they were of saints and crucifixes, and one was an image of the Blessed Saviour nailed to the Cross; would he make her look like that, or like that other sweet image of the Holy Virgin?

Hewitt smiled again. No; she would look like none of these, but only like her lovely self. Would she give him a sitting? that is, could the cattle take care of themselves for an hour in the morning while he painted her sweet face.

Yes, she understood at last. Her dark eyes glowed with pleasure, and a soft blush came over her bright face, that made Hewitt's nerves thrill with a new sense of her beauty. They would ride out of the village in the early morn-

ing, she said, and when she had disposed of the cattle, he might paint her for hours, if he wished only she wanted to look like the Holy Virgin, and could he not paint Jack somewhere in the picture too? Jack and the Holy Virgin! Oh! Juanita, Juan'ita! I fear those two images held somewhat equal places in the heathen darkness of your young heart! but I would have less delicacy than Ned Hewitt if I were to smile over your droll request, for the artist only looked at her in his usually kind way, and tried to make her understand that if he could get all the sweet purity of her face within the lines of his picture it's loveliness would far surpass that of all the saints in Christendom.

And Juanita filled with a sense of something new and beautiful in her gray life, went slowly over the hill with the tinaja, and scarcely minded the scolding her harsh step-mother gave her

for having stayed so long at the spring, and curled herself up on her heap of straw, to sleep as she had never slept before in all her life, and dream of pictures, and saints, and Jack; but most of all of Ned Hewitt, who seemed always hovering everywhere, forever telling the meaning of things, and smiling the same sweet, frank smile through all time.

And so all that long white summer in San Luis Valley, these two came and went from the village to the mesa, and Hewitt carried both the tinaja and the fagots for Juanita, that she might see, as he said, how women were cared for in his World; and I imagine her's had been a very strange nature indeed, had not all these little kindnesses, the first she had ever known, not sunk into her heart, as grateful, cooling water sinks into dry, parched soil.

Hewitt was as great an anomaly to Juanita

as she was to him, and so each in his way making studies of the other, the summer soon passed away, and the crimson and brown and gold of autumn was creeping into the mountain foliage, before the sittings were finished, and the elaborate sketches ready for painting. During all those long, happy days Juanita had nearly forgotten all her small miseries, going about as though in a dream, maintaining a silence for the most part, even with Hewitt, who invariably rallied her upon it, and thought, in his careless way, it must be the girl's natural timidity that kept her so quiet in the presence of a stranger, but I am not at all sure that was the reason, and I think, on the whole, perhaps old lazy Jack, who watched her with so much kindly interest that summer, understood her moods better than did the artist who was engaged in studying every changing expression of her

face. Juanita had never been so delighted with anything as she was with the scarlet plush and cloth of gold; upon first seeing it she had clapped her hands and danced about like a child, and when the sketches were finished, Hewitt had given her the rich stuffs for her own, and had added to the gift, the golden snakes he had coiled about her arms, and the great jewelled pins which were to hold up the heavy masses of her hair in the picture. Juanita's gratitude for these superb gifts had been as pure and simple as a child's, but the padre had come upon her, as she walked across the plaza with them on her arm, and had bidden her restore them to the giver, with so much sternness in his face and voice, that she had flown in terror to the little inn where Hewitt lived, and begged him with many sobs to take them back.

That night the padre came to old Jose's hut, and while Juanita tossed uneasily on her rude bed, the two men sat on the wooden bench outside the door, and she heard them muttering low imprecations against the vile Americano, who dared to trifle with the daughter of the colony.

"The girl was always a fool!" Jose said. Had he not told the padre now nearly seventeen years ago, how the saints had cursed him in sending him a daughter?

This and many other similar remarks, fell upon Juanita's ear, as she lay in her close corner, and knew her father and the priest were plotting against the fair stranger. Oh! what made her heart ache so, this long dreadful night? why did she start at every sound as if pursued by the Evil One himself? Had she not her beads and her little crucifix, and did not

the Holy Virgin know how innocent she was? Had she not always been regular at mass, at vespers, at confessional? And what if they killed this fair stranger, in their hard savage wrath, which when aroused, knew no such thing as mercy? He would not be the first Americano who had accidentally (?) fallen over a precipice in this wild desolate region, since the hated invasion of the steam-horse, and even if she had loved him a little—Bah! he had never spoken to her of love, what was she thinking of? true he had once or twice touched the tips of her fingers with his lips, but what was that? Juanita was used to the hot love-making of the South. Thus she reasoned with herself the whole night through, but when the morning dawned she knew it was of no avail; knew that her heart had gone out unasked to a hated Americano, and that her future could but be

one of wretched penitence. Rising softly, as the sun came streaming in at the little greasy window, half blind with grief and terror lest she should disturb her father's slumbers, and so catch the first burst of that fiery wrath, which she knew must soon descend upon her luckless head, she left the house, and sought out the chapel, where she sank upon the stone floor before her favorite saint, pouring out her bursting heart in such an eloquence of prayer, that one might almost have fancied the gaudy red and blue saints on the wall were shedding tears of pity, and that the thorn-crowned Christ in the altar window was sorrowing over her, as over the one sinner that repenteth.

“Senorita, why do you cry?”

The girl started shudderingly as with a new fear, but it was only Ned Hewitt, standing there in the purple glory of the altar window,

through which the morning sun was throwing long bright shadows on his fair hair.

He was dressed as if for a journey. He was going away, he said, and had come to bid the Senorita farewell. Why did she cry? Was she in trouble? Could he help her in any way before he went? Ah! she was lovelier than ever, now that he must leave her, he said. Would she think of him sometimes when he was gone?

The girl had risen from her knees, and was leaning heavily against one of the stone pillars of the chapel. Yes, he was going out of her life forever, and there would be left only the Virgin, and Jack, and—

Hark! there are footsteps!

"Fly Senor!" Juanita cries. "My father, and the padre—"

And thus it was that Ned Hewitt returned

so suddenly to New York, where some six months later, the dream of that mid-summer day was realized, for Juanita's portrait gained him the desired admission to the Academy, and for a time he was prince of good fellows among all the young American artists.

There on the rich wall the portrait hangs in all its glowing beauty ; its rosy lips parted, just as they were that hot mid-summer day so long ago, when he wrapped the scarlet plush and cloth of gold about her, and wound the golden snakes on her lovely arms. Like the original it is very beautiful, and no visitor to the Academy ever comes away without that sweet image impressed upon his heart.

Most people fancy it is an ideal sketch of a Spanish princess, and Ned Hewitt tells no tales. Often as he stands before it, his own eyes fill with tears that he is forced to dry up-

on the approach of his children, or his lady-wife. The critics have discovered that he has some talent, but he knows that strive as he will, he can never hope to equal his portrait of Juanita. Impulses like that do not come twice in a life-time, and perhaps after all he loved her. Who knows?

Mrs. Hewitt, nee Miss Fanny Gray, would, I am sure, give a negative answer to so strange a question, and so you and I had best not ask it, but rather content ourselves with fancies.

And Juanita?

Far away in Santa Fe, where the summers are even longer and hotter than they are in San Luis Valley, where the glare of the bright August sun beats down so pitilessly on the rough stones of the plaza, and the white walls of a convent rise among the green leaves of great trees, lives a beauteous woman whose sweet

sad face looks wonderingly out at the visitor, from the garb of a nun.

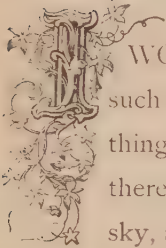
Here in the convent yard, a mule now well advanced in years, is grazing quietly on the rich herbage, and presently the woman comes slowly out to caress him, and feed him broken dainties from her hand.

It is the penance the two are doing for that Portrait of a Lady.



FANCIES OF THE SNOW.

FANCIES OF THE SNOW.

 I WONDER why it is that snow has such a softening influence over everything? Last night when I retired there was a high wind, an overcast sky, and people were hurried hither and thither whether they would or no. The city looked so dismal that I was glad to lower my curtains and draw my easy-chair still nearer the blazing fire, where my book-rest and a steaming glass stood in readiness on the hearth.

The firelight threw most cheerful shadows into the corners of my cosy room, but somehow I knew the whole household was in an ill-humor, knew that the landlady was in the

housekeeper's room grumbling over the advanced price of produce; that her daughter was impatiently dawdling over a book she could not understand; that the three students whose room is just opposite mine, were wrangling over the relative values of angles and triangles; that cook and housemaid were not on such affectionate terms as one might have wished; and that I, myself, was so nervous and irritable that I started as if shot from the mouth of a cannon every time one of those great blasts came howling down the chimney, and poking its nose into the secret corners of my apartment.

When I think of last night now, I am aware that my room must have been very cheerful in the warm glow of the wood-fire, with my favorite authors looking down so kindly on me from their places on the shelves, and those priceless paintings of Bonheur's and of Land-

seer's brightening the whole room with their cheery presence.

I know now that I, like the other members of this silly household, should learn to exercise more control over my truant nerves than to let the howling of the wind and the blackness of the sky upset me so.

I dare say if we had all been carried to that windy corner, and had our physical beings upset in that darksome puddle as our poor washer-woman had, we would have come back to our rooms quite satisfied with books and pictures, pens, music and needle-work ; but although when one is in a cheerful mood he has so many resources of enjoyment within himself, I will lay a wager that when the wind rises again we shall all be in quite as bad a humor as we were last night, and yet this morning no living thing could be any brighter or happier than

every individual member of this house. Outdoors the snow has transformed all the houses into crystal temples, all the fences into walls of solid pearl, and all the minor objects into the softest, daintiest statuary. In my landlady's yard the most familiar objects assume the semblance of artistic creations, and the long rows of old pails and tubs long since fallen into disuse, their rude outlines softened by this fleecy covering, take on the shapely forms of tiny crystal pyramids and reflect a thousand waves of colored light in the bright sunshine.

In the breakfast-room the people are all smiles and pleasantries; the boys have contrived to untangle the angles, the landlady has evidently some secret cause for encouragement, and the housemaid brings in the muffins with more grace than she has used the whole winter.

And so I am constrained to think that the Snow brings a host of peaceful influences in her great white mantle, with which she covers all the earth and deals out kindness to both glad and sorry souls in entirely equal proportions, and as I gaze abroad at all her wondrous loveliness, it seems to me she is a spirit of the air sent to purify the lives of men.

I have seldom heard of a murder having been committed out among those pure white drifts, where a drop of blood in the winter sunlight would proclaim the horror of the deed through the entire course of a long day.

I recall few cases of starvation throughout the country when the snow is on the ground, for this is the season of the year when the wants of the poor are more carefully considered than at any other time. I think statistics will show there are fewer suicides committed

through long white winters than at mid-summer, when the terrible heats drive men as well as dogs to desperate deeds, or in chill dreary November, when life and courage seem to ooze out with the early darkness and the damp wet mornings.

And so Fair Spirit of the season, sweet emblem of purity and harbinger of peace, all hail to thee! To me thou art the most welcome phase of all our many weathers. I can imagine lovers plighting their troth, and mothers kissing their children at the first indication of thy coming, so near akin art thou to all that is true and beautiful in life.

It seems to me that clear snowy weather should be the great festival time of the whole year, and if I were managing the universe, I would set all the married people at roast turkey and plum-pudding, all the children at

blind-man's buff and sugar-plums, and all the lovers speeding miles away over the country in that sweet ecstasy of young confession that can never know cold or distance.

Then I would fill all the theaters with grand opera, and I would open the doors alike to rich and poor. I would call in my pale-faced seamstress who always weeps when she hears sweet sounds, so exquisite an ear has she for melody. I would beckon yonder hard-worked clerk who is trudging so wearily to his scanty home, after his long toilsome day on an office-stool; I would empty school-houses of hundreds of weary teachers, whose whole lives are but one sad story of cruel self-repression; I would call together dozens of shabby clergymen—poor souls in those shiny thread-bare coats, that seem to have endured since the beginning of time. Here and there I would

select a struggling ambitious student or a poor friendless factory girl into whose eyes the tears would spring at the touch of a kindly hand.

I would not take no for an answer. I would drive them all in at those gilded portals, just as I would drive that flock of lambs I love so much out at my farm, and when I had seen them all comfortably seated I would assume the shape of a good Brownie, that I might hover in those stained windows, and go off into uncontrollable laughter, when I saw the pale faces of these human Lambs all flushed and joyous with the music.

I would go to the greatest living prima donna and say, "Madame, at one time you were very heartless. You allowed a poor Italian director to die over here in St. Louis for the mere want of plain food and warm lodgings, and Oh! for shame, he was your brother! No, I cannot

forgive you for that—but this is snow-time, carnival-time—and now I hope you will sing for love to these poor people as you have never sung for money in all your life !”

Then, too, I confess I should enjoy a sprinkling of rich people in my theatres, just enough to give color and tone to all those pale faces and sad eyes of my poor Lambs. I should invite a certain queenly woman whom I know, to don all her rich furs, to fasten costly jewels on her shapely arms, and throw a mantle of heavy satin about her form, and then when she came sweeping her rich dress into the place, I would bid her bow and smile to each poor soul who looked at her in silent admiration ; and if anywhere in this crowded city I could find a man who I really believed was created in God's image—a man who had never wronged the woman who loved him, or scoffed at the entreaties

of a helpless child whose right it was to call him father, I would say, "Come to my temple and be king of all the multitude!"

And I would call them together, he and she, in some high place which should pass for a throne, and I would say to them, "Lead these poor people to-day, in all gentleness and kindness for their own best good," and then I would relapse into a Brownie again and repair to my purple window, there to hold my tiny sides in convulsions of the most elfish mirth; and when the concert was ended and the poor dear Lambs came out of the theatre all flushed and trembling with new joy, I would go to my king, he who is looking so fondly into the depths of the sweet eyes of that queenly woman whom I hope soon to make his wife, and I would say to him, "Tell them to remember! . Another genuine opera next carnival-time, when the first snow

falls and the year is wrapped in virgin white!" Thus do I dream away the snow-time, while all unheeded my idle pen lies quietly in my desk, and my foolish brain goes wool-gathering into space.



PICTURES IN THE FIRE-LIGHT.

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WHEN all things else fail me; when my books have no more significance to me than if I were a blind man; when the bright colorings of my pictures always irritate and annoy me until I am forced to turn their sweet faces to the wall; when the sound of a piano is to me like the noise of brazen trumpets, and the sight of pen and paper makes me shudder; when my poor head is throbbing with a thousand little sharp pains—like the prickings of fine needles—then it is that I love to bar my door, inhospitable soul that I am, and draw my

low rocker before the great, open, blazing fire that is my one consolation in time of trouble.

Out-doors, the dark unfriendly weather may do its best to make me wretched; whole rivers of rain and hail may dash about my window-panes; the printer may be howling for copy, and my poor laundress knocking in vain for the sum I have not yet earned; still the fire-light remains with me, to soothe my poor weary nerves, and in a low monotonous undertone, to sing me sweet simple songs that I have long since learned to love.

There is something so weird about the great ruddy shadows on the hearth—something so strange in this dumb sense of companionship, that if I were in an analytical mood, I would strive to discover a reason for this state of things, and in so doing would of course destroy all the little pleasure this vague sense

affords me, for so soon as a thing is reduced to a common-sense basis, just so soon do all its beauties take to themselves wings.

No, I do not want to know any reasons for anything to-night. Alas! do I not follow out a course of reasoning through all my dreary, hard-worked days? I will not even allow to myself, that if I sit idly here all this long night, I shall have nothing accomplished by morning, and will consequently be in a worse humor to-morrow.

I tell you, so perverse a sprite am I, I will not be responsible to-night, and if some modern Atlas gets into trouble, endeavoring to lift the whole world, I cannot help it. I am only a poor weak creature, and certainly not to blame—and so I bar them all out, that in common parlance, I may sit and mope, my elbows on my knees, and go over all my little griev-

ances that I have years ago committed to memory, and make savage faces at the mirror for revealing all these ugly wrinkles in my face, and all these long silver threads in my hair, for Father Time makes no exceptions in my case, nor waits for me an hour.

Ah! how nervous I am, I will turn the mirror to the wall, as I turned my pictures—there it is done, and as I resume my chair, a face actually beckons me from the fire! No, I am not dreaming. Only comfortable, happy people dream. I—I—alas! it has ever been my fate in life to be always awake, always on the alert. And yet—ah! it is not only a face; 'tis an entire figure of a girl, a very bud of opening womanhood. A little primrose face, with deep violet eyes, a head of long golden curls, and a slight delicate figure, full of easy grace, such as painters love.

She stretches two tiny hands toward me, I can see her red lips move, and hear above the sobbing of the fire, the sweet word sister, and then a flood of memories sweep through my heart, and I see again the old farm-house where we lived with our sainted mother. Again, toward the close of a winter's day, we have gone out on the ice-pond, and my sister's little feet have broken through a thin place in the ice, and I—may God forgive me, have lost a chance of succor by allowing myself to go into such a frenzy of fright as to lose my voice, and to be unable to call for help.

All my life this thing has haunted me; it has made me old before my time, and paralyzed my energies in the prime of my years,—but only see how she smiles at me, how she reaches out her arms as if to fold me to her heart! I think she must see how lonely and miserable

I am to-night, and the angels must long since have named her Pity, for,—she is going—sorry indeed am I to spare her, so different she always was from other mortals, and now she has flown back to Spirit-Land, but not until a soft little hand has been laid on my fevered brow, and a sweet voice has bidden me take courage.

And so I am alone again, and were it not for the fire-light I know not what would become of me this sorry winter-time of my age; but see! there comes another picture. How the flames leap up, as if to give it royal welcome. Thank Heaven! 'tis the image of my mother. Now by God's grace shall I be preserved for all time from wrong-doing, now shall Right be my watchword and Truth my weapon of earthly warfare. Oh! can you not see how beautiful it is, that brown wrinkled face with its waves of silvery hair, and its sweet brown eyes gaz-

ing at me in so much wistfulness and love. "Mother," I cry, "Only come near me once more! touch my proud, foolish head. Teach me as when I was a little child, lessons of patience and forbearance. Bid my wicked heart be still,—show me how I may direct my course of life into usefulness!"

Once more as in the old days I feel that hallowed touch; once more I am become as a little child, and feel the wrinkled cheek of that dear saint on mine in one long, lingering caress. Ah! dear God, cannot you leave me my mother? I who am so old and worn and tempest-tossed on the rude sea of Life? You will not take her again, you will leave her to me that I may care for her always, and cross her dear hands on her breast at last, just as I crossed them in that old farm-house the night her sweet soul went out across the dark river of Eternity. But the low

monotone of the fire only sings, no, poor soul, this may not be so with you ; and presently she is gone, and I must needs bow my head in humble resignation. Yet I cannot but be happier that I have seen these dear faces for the first time in so many years, that they have come back to me from their spirit home, as one crosses a hot, weary desert that he may fetch water to one he loves.

And thus it seems even in the new life, in the life everlasting, they love me still ; I, who was ever cold and imperious ; I who have caused them so many bitter tears, so many hours of sorrow—surely I have much to be thankful for ; I will mend my ways and let the sweet incense of love into my darksome heart.

But what is this ? The picture of a young man ? A frank, boyish face with soft blue eyes. A man's face to come to me at this late day,

like some old legend or story out of Fairy-land? Let me see—ah! yes, I remember now, it is the face of him who was my lover, and but for whose untimely death in the cruel wars, I should have been a happy wife to-night, with little children hanging on my neck, and nestling in my heart to keep it warm through all the cold of winter.

I remember what a poor heart-broken thing I was in those days, when his company came marching home without him, and said he had died of starvation away off there in that cruel Southern prison. Yes, I have missed him very sadly, these twenty long years of our separation, and now I am old and withered, and he is still as fair and young as he was in the days of our wooing. Ah! love, you can never know how sweet your face is to me now as I see it there in the fire with all the old-time

love-light in its bright eyes. Can it be you are going too? you, who have come so much farther than all the rest to see me? you who can understand, as even the spirit of my mother cannot, how weary are my long days of toil, how lonely my sleepless nights, how faint my beacon light of hope?

Yes, you know all this, but you are going—I can see you fade out of the firelight gradually, little by little, just as you faded out of my young life so long ago—but you will see my mother, love, and my sister, and you will say to them “She is so much better for your having come,” and you will save me a place in Spirit-land, that I may sit near you all, when my own turn comes, in the sweet after-time—

It is morning again. The cold white rays of the winter sun are streaming into my room.

I am worn by my long vigil, famished by

the long hours that have passed since I tasted food, but not for all the palaces of the East, not for the wealth of kings, not for the love of rosy children, nor all the fabled gems of song and story, would I give my pictures in the fire-light.



JUNE ROSES.

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HAT a novel study a quaint old farm-house is to a young girl fresh from the busy surroundings of her city home. Her numerous passionate appeals for a visit to the country have finally met with some indulgent relative's approval, and now, one bright June day, she finds herself actually transported to what she has ever dreamed must be pure Arcadia—the quiet of a remote farm-house. Fancy has long pictured a cottage overgrown with clambering vines and all blooming things of an equally romantic nature. What, then, is her

surprise at finding a long, low rambling red house, with faded green shutters and small high windows, which look exactly like so many curious peering little eyes turned full upon her as she trips up the broad garden walk, making a half dozen stops ere she reaches the door, to admire and examine the old-fashioned plants that grow so thickly about the edges of those venerable flower beds known as boxes.

She is charmed with the hearty welcome she receives at the hands of all, and with the extreme tidiness and orderliness of all the simple household. She actually devours her supper of snowy, home-made bread, served with the sweetest butter and honey; and though she stares a little when the early preparations for retiring commence, she has soon sunk to rest amid the billowy softness of the old four-poster and is far away upon the wings of those sweet

dreams known only to healthy, happy girlhood.

The wardrobe she has brought with her she considers a marvel of rustic simplicity, but when she bounds into the old dining-room in the morning, clad in some white soft stuff, with a bright ribbon at her waist and a bunch of dewy, freshly gathered roses at her throat, she electrifies the quiet little assembly, which, with one accord, bestows upon her a long, lingering look of hearty undisguised admiration. She has resolved to be agreeable to every one, and, indeed, finds it an easy task where every one is so agreeable to her. She praises the country ham and eggs, ecstasizes over the rich cream as it is generously lavished upon her coffee; and, in short, so takes the whole table by storm, that the young farmers, stalwart good-looking fellows too, glance slyly at her

as they pass on their way across the wide porch to the scene of their daily labor, and wonder if all city girls are such as she.

Now, there is not so much difference, perhaps, if the truth were told, between the fair daughters of the most populous cities and their very often equally well-favored country cousins. The difference often lies wholly in the surroundings, and a refined country girl is not such a *rara avis* as some people suppose now-a-days. If, added to her general style and cultured penetration, the city mouse had but an inkling of the country mouse's sweet simplicity and substantial intelligence, she might bag richer birds than she does, and make a living, talking ornament for a drawing-room that any good man might be proud to possess. But her simplicity is too often but the silliness of affectation, and her intelligence so superfi-

cial as to awaken ridicule rather than esteem. The country mouse, on the other hand, is unfit for battle with the world, from her ingenuous lack of tact and a thorough inaptness at general style, without which a woman is completely out of Rome in these modern days.

But to return to the bright little lassie who explores the treasure-trove of an old farmhouse for the first time. She flits all over the place from garret to cellar, before the noon of the first day's visit, displaying such an amount of curiosity and asking questions so very volubly as almost to distract the sober house-wife and her decorous maidens, who, wholly unused to butterfly interruptions like these, so far forget themselves several times as to make grave mistakes, like using sugar for salt, and others of a similar nature. At these interesting junctures, the little lass, whom we will call Bright

Eyes, invariably claps her hands, and, laughing merrily, offers in her wholly incompetent way to repair the mischief she has so thoughtlessly wrought; but the maids like her in spite of the trouble she makes them, and of the pretty coquettish glances she throws across the table at the boys. They carry a little wooden rocker to the dairy, and let her sit there in the cool, stone building, while they fashion the golden butter she loves so well. And then in the evening, when the work is done, they harness old Dobbin with their own strong willing hands, and take Miss Bright Eyes for a drive about the neighborhood.

In her kindly girlish way she studies every face which meets her view, and smiles so sweetly upon every new rustic as wholly to disarm any prejudice which might have existed against that "city gal."

She is particularly amused by the great piles of rag carpeting which the house-wife has stored away in the garret, against a time of need, and with the multitudinous gayly-colored calico bed quilts with which every cupboard and closet in the house is literally pressed down and running over.

She is told that the house was built "forty years ago last winter," and that the furniture stands in the rooms just as it did that happy day when "John brought me home a proud and blushing bride." There is a suspicious moisture in the good wife's eyes, as she saunters through the house with this bright "young thing, displaying her old and curious household, for, in a remote corner, under a faded chintz curtain, stands a low old-fashioned cradle, its once snowy belongings now yellow with the lapse of years; and a little green grave,

with its tiny headstone, just outside the house there on the lawn, is all there is left to tell the tale of the joyous young creature, who was born to be the life and light of the sombre old farm. "Dear little thing," the house-wife says, "an' she'd a'been just your age now. Law me, how time does fly!"

The morning service in the village church is a very novel one to Bright Eyes, who has never heard so much gospel and so few resonant periods in her life before, and who, between the strong doctrine and the funny bonnets which surround her on all sides, is awed into as complete an attentiveness as that of the most reverent village church-goer.

Taking it altogether, the city mouse is inclined to think very kindly of her country cousins, who have given her such a charming week in their midst, and who it is hoped, will

be equally as well pleased when Bright Eyes herself turns hostess, and all the charming possibilities of her city home are brought forth in their behalf.



THE HONEYSUCKLE COTTAGE.

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FROM my window I can see the ruins of a quaint little cottage set in the centre of a large garden and guarded by two giant elms.

The front garden is filled with unkept shrubbery, and there are broken bits of brick and stone which mark the place where a long, narrow walk once wound its way among the greenery to the door. The house is, or has been, an old-fashioned cottage, built after the old style, with two tiny wings and long French windows opening upon a little piazza, where I remember seeing a pair of lovers sit on summer evenings, beneath the shade of a thick vine of

honeysuckle, which, together with the other shrubbery, formed to my youthful imagination a scene of pastoral loveliness.

I remember always dropping my toys when the twilight came on, and repairing to an upper window, from which point I could observe the lovers and the little vine-wreathed house to my heart's content, until darkness settled down over everything and I was obliged to retire only half-satisfied with viewing a picture of which I never wearied. Child as I was, that little habitation had more charm for me than all the pomp and glitter of the more splendid country-seats at the other end of the village.

I loved flowers, and the house being so tiny, I presume had the same significance to me as my doll-house, which I was always placing in the centre of a piece of sward and surrounding with twigs of roses broken from the bushes in

the door-yard, in direct imitation of what was then known to the villagers as The Honeysuckle Cottage.

Then, too, I used to arrange Tom and Sue, my pet dolls, after the fashion of a tableau, on the tiny piazza of my doll-house, and between the parted muslin curtains at the window an elderly mother-doll always stood, in exact imitation of the lady who was mistress of the cottage and the mother of that sweet young thing who sat through all those long summer twilights with the man she loved. •

I used to think nature put the world in order for that twilight hour, the street was always so quiet, and the flowers so sleepy when the young man came. Then too the young girl always wore soft white draperies that used to float on the evening air like the robes of an angel, and it always seemed to me, fair Luna

loved to throw long shadows of real gold on the little cottage, whereas the more pretentious mansions had to content themselves with the palest reflections of her majesty.

Even when it rained, the cottage never seemed shrouded in gloom, as was the wont of so many houses on our street. On wet evenings a bright light always shone in the windows, and the rich tones of the young man's deep voice blended with the sweet, silvery ones of the young girl, always rang out, to the music of an old piano, making the sweetest accompaniment to the patter of the rain-drops. Sometimes when the rain ceased, I would see them come out in the doorway for a moment, and laugh at the poor sleepy honeysuckle who had shut her bright eyes at the first approach of the rain-drops. I heard them say they liked the rain, and in fact I think there were few

things they disliked, in those brief, blissful summers of their betrothal.

I used to run over there in the mornings when the young girl was training the honeysuckle about the lattice, and when the sunlight fell on her golden hair I thought it was heaven's kiss on that fair young head—she seemed so much in harmony with all the sweet silent influences of earth and air. I remember she always welcomed me with a smile and a kiss, and fed me with little homely dainties made by her own hands.

They were all alone in the world, she and the lady, her silver-haired mother, whose aged expressive face told of so many sorrows and happinesses in the past. I believe they were English people, and that some misfortune had brought them all this long way from home, across the great ocean, to the new world. The

lady always looked as if she had just stepped out of a picture, in those soft gray silks with the narrow lace ruffles at her throat and wrists, and the young girl was always in those fleecy frocks from early spring until autumn came again.

I think the young man, who was the young girl's lover, was more to the sweet simple lives of those two dear women, than the heir of a throne can ever be to his princess-consort, or even to the fond, proud heart of his queenly mother. It seemed they had known him a great many years, and although there was no formality between them, even a child might observe a refinement in their intercourse, of which Americans know so little.

I am sure they never met without that grave sweet salutation of hand-shaking, although their lips did not always meet in a warmer

caress, and the young man always asked for the lady, and greeted her in the exact way that he would have met his hostess in a drawing-room. I wonder if people ever reflect upon how far the little refined attentions of social life go to make life worth living? I am sure it never occurred to this simple trio that their manners were in any way superior to those of their bluff, hearty neighbors. The lady's manners were simply those that her mother had taught her, and the young girl could never have been otherwise than refined, with such a mother as her's was, and yet there was something so indescribably charming in their society, that I used to sit with them for hours at a time, until my nurse was dispatched to bring me home. These good people loved children, and I think they were the only persons I have ever met, who in any way understood or sympa-

thized with little folks, especially with fanciful little folks, in all their many real and imaginary pleasures and woes. I was not at all timid with them, in fact they drew out my thoughts so unknowingly, that I never realized I was opening my heart to them until long years afterward, when the lady and the young girl had become to earth only a memory, and when well advanced toward womanhood, I began to cast about me for friends such as they had been, to find not only an entire absence of anything in human nature like them, but also a doubly aching void inasmuch as these sweet souls had been, but were not.

I remember feeling an intense jealousy of the young man, invariably running home so soon as he made his appearance, and I must say that while this singular freak would have created merriment in almost any other, the

young girl always looked grieved at my foolish pique, and kissed me again and again to assure me of her affection. The young man, too, always tried to conciliate me, but my instincts were too strong; I knew whose heart he filled, and so I soon began to time my visits in the early morning, leaving the twilights jealously to him.

When I think of those three sweet summers now, I think their lives might perhaps have gone on in the same untroubled way until to-day, with little difference, except that the young girl would have worn a wedding-ring, and little children, in her own image, would have played about her feet in the shade of the honeysuckle, had it not been that disease so soon fastened his cruel fangs upon her delicate frame, and death with his long bony finger, pointed onward to the grave.

She was only slightly unwell at first, and always among the flowers in the summer mornings, where I often went to her, to ask her how she had rested through the night, but I soon learned that the twilights on the piazza were given up, and that she lay quietly on the sofa instead, while the lady and the young man sang or read to her for a few brief hours, until she would fall into a lethargy which was not sleep, yet from which they could not rouse her until morning. At first they thought she would soon be well again, and sought to encourage her by promises of little gifts, and journeys she was to take when she recovered. The young girl always smiled at these promises, and laid her warm flushed cheeks against their palms, in grateful acknowledgment of their love, but I am sure she knew from the beginning of her illness that she must leave them

soon, and that all their dreams of future bliss could not be realized except in heaven.

I have seen her great, bright eyes follow the young man and the lady when she knew they were not looking, and I have seen their lovely depths full of grave concern and sorrow, not for herself, but for those she must leave behind. I think she feared things must go ill with them when she had gone, so well she knew how they loved her, and how blank must be their lives without her. This fear for her dear ones was all that seemed to try her in those last weary months of pain and suffering. For herself she was resigned; so easy is it, for sweet souls like her's, to put off mortality for everlasting life.

She had forsaken the out-door twilights for a long time, and taken to her sofa constantly, before the thought ever flashed across the

young man's mind that she would soon fade out of his life forever. The cruel truth came upon him very suddenly, and I know his heart broke those long dull days in the autumn of the year, and the winter of her life.

Summer sped away very early that year; and I have always thought nature sent those sobbing autumn rains that season, out of pure grief for the young thing who had always been her earnest worshipper. And so, while the drooping rain fell on the piazza, and hung the honeysuckle with glistening tear-drops, the flames leaped high from the great wood fire in the little parlor, and the young girl grew as white as the forced rosebuds they sent her every morning, and on either cheek burned those little hectic spots, which were, alas! the harbingers of her untimely end.

I believe the lady was not surprised, when

the doctor told her the fatal truth. Consumption had long been in her family, and though she grew paler and thinner herself as the sorrowful days went by, I cannot remember ever hearing her murmur at the hardness of fate. She was old, and her time, too, must come soon.

After all, it was for the young man she sorrowed most. He it was who must live on through the empty, dreary years; he, in the pride of his strength, in the glow of his manly beauty; he already half-way up the ladder that men call fortune—broken, bent, aged before his time. They knew too well, how changed he would be in a few short years, for all his life he had loved the young girl, and they knew he would go down to his grave with her name on his lips.

I used to think the young girl was the greater mourner in these last days, for her

lover's mind was already bending beneath its great weight, and it was she who preserved the clearest perception down to the very end. The last night of her life, she begged him to rouse himself from the stupor she saw enveloping him, and go out into the world doing good for her sake; but I fear she must have known it was too late, for when they found her sweet, dead face among its pillows, his eyes were fixed in a glassy stare, that was very different from the sweet, calm look the angels had left in her's.

And so it came about that they buried her yonder in the church-yard, among all those mossy graves, with the long afternoon shadows falling on the stone at her head; and, somehow, it has always seemed to me, that the sunlight loves to fall on the grave of the young girl; and that when the doves come on their annual

pilgrimage, they hover for hours together, over this pure young thing whose prototypes they are, and when I hear them moaning over her mossy grave, I think of the poor, old senseless creature whom I met in the street yesterday begging for alms, and my tears flow unrestrained, for I know that this is he, who was her lover in those sweet summer twilights of my childhood.

As I turn sadly away from the church-yard, I behold this same weary old man approaching the place, with slow and feeble footsteps. He gives me a dull, meaningless look, and goes on by the same well-known path I have just trod to her grave.

Oh! could he but know how I loved her too, and how my heart was wrung when they carried her out here, to live forever among the doves and the long afternoon shadows. Could

he but know how I, like him, have yearned for her all these long years since I have known she can never come back to either of us.

And yet, I never go into that empty cottage with its broken windows, where the birds have long since built their nests, and where the great spiders hang their webs like threads of gossamer through the open sunshine, that her sweet presence is not with me as it was in the old days. Again we are twining the branches of the honeysuckle, not over the dilapidated windows and porches of this poor, broken old house, but over the snowy lattice of what was then, and what will ever be to my memory through all the years, the dearest, loveliest place on earth, sweet Honeysuckle Cottage!

PLEASANT PEOPLE.

PLEASANT PEOPLE.



HAT a relief it is to find people who are really pleasant! Not selfish, fashionable, conventional people who over-awe you with their superior knowledge, and gaze on you with pity when you attempt a remark; nor prejudiced people; nor people who talk chiefly upon politics or religion; nor people of one idea who harp on it continually. O! dear no, not any of these, but really, pleasant companionable people, with whom you may exchange ideas, in whose houses you feel perfectly at home; where you may go and sit for

an hour, and talk about the day's doings or anything that interests you, without fear of molestation or adverse criticism; where your remarks pass for what they are; where you may express your opinions freely, without fear of misconstruction, and where you may glean golden ideas from your thoughtful, intelligent friend, who varies the monotony of your every-day existence by expressions and interpretations which would never occur to your weary brain, did you not receive such valuable hints through the enchanting medium of a little quiet rational conversation.

You go to your friend weary and care-worn, her quiet tones soothe and calm your spirit, and her ideas put new life into you, and make you forget your weariness and grow enthusiastic. This desirable effect is something that is rarely experienced in society and seldom in

the home circle; as people living in the same house travel over each other's minds so often that a frequent exchange of ideas often leads over precisely the same ground that it did yesterday or the day before. Outside companionship, a friend to whom one may fly as a conversational refuge, at least once a week, is an adjunct to the life of every man and woman, which should be considered as indispensable as the morning paper or mid-day meal. Somewhere in your head there are ideas; they do not come out during your customary interviews with your servants, nor do they often vent themselves upon your husband, who hurries away in the morning and returns at night quite too weary for anything like exhilarating conversation. You have ideas, find a listener and express them. Don't shut up the best part of yourself like a nautilus does in its shell. Don't

allow yourself to grow so rusty in expression as not to be able to write a pleasant paragraph.

Read, talk, write. Keep your eyes and ears open, for your children's sake, if not your own, and never sink to that miserable mediocrity which encompasses three-fourths of the world's people who are not "pleasant" by any means.



FAITH MARLEY'S CHRISTMAS.

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WAY back in the dim recesses of my memory there is stored a picture of a white country landscape at Christmas time, with a soft gray sky and little chattering snow-birds giving forth the only sounds that disturb the otherwise perfect stillness; there are broad smoke wreaths curling from the old red chimneys, and the faint creak of a saw in the distance, falls upon the ear like the drowsy hum of a bee in summer.

On such a morning—being then a mere child—I remember having been driven to Uncle Marley's in one of those old-time vehicles

known in rural districts as bob-sleds, and upon being ejected from the same, and relieved of the extra quantity of snow that enveloped me, I have a faint recollection of waddling up the walk, not without several accidents however, such as falling squarely upon my infantile nose, my heels for some occult reason projecting wildly into space. I remember lying there a few minutes, strengthened by a conceit such as my wife now tells me belongs to all masculine children, and also to those children of a larger growth, that my cousin Faith would come running out of the house, as was her wont, in her pretty blue hood and mittens, her rosy cheeks all aglow with exercise, to pick me out of the snow-drift, and having quieted my screams with kisses, run laughing with me into the house. All this I lay there imagining, hugging the sweet unction to my heart, and

quite content to wait till she should come. But Faith did not hasten to my rescue that morning, and good Aunt Marley finally catching sight of my copper-toed boots sticking so curiously out of the drift, came running to my aid, her cap strings flying in the breeze, and her soft, brown eyes wearing a sad expression I had never seen them wear before. I became contrite at once.

"I ain't hurt, Aunty," I said. "I tell you a secret, Aunty, I was just lying here waiting for Faith to come and pick me up." Thus reassured, as I supposed, Aunt Marley laughed in spite of herself, though her face grew very grave as we entered the old kitchen where the great logs blazed on the hearth, and the long shining rows of tins, arranged on the walls by Faith's willing hands, reflected the firelight and shone like burnished silver; the cat dozed

in its place on the hearth, and the tall clock in the corner ticked away the hours slowly and lazily, as only country clocks can do.

Uncle Marley was in his accustomed place, but strange to say, neither dozing nor reading. His white head was bowed on his hand, and his eyes seemed intent on fathoming some mystery in the fire. He looked up as I entered, but child as I was, I missed the enthusiastic welcome the old man usually gave me, and I was hurt.

"Where's Faith?" I said, my sensitive little voice beginning to choke with sobs; the thermometer of my intelligence told me there was something wrong with Uncle and Aunt Marley's temperature this morning. I would find Faith and be comforted! I knew where to find her. When absent from the great kitchen or dining-room as it was more properly called, I

knew that Faith was generally in her own room, a cozy little place at the other end of the house which had been sacred to her use since her childhood; but would wonders never cease? Aunt Marley refused to let me go to her! Here was a pretty state of things, indeed. I, Johnny Marley, Faith Marley's favorite among a whole host of ruddy little cousins; I for whom she had popped corn, and cracked nuts, and made ginger-bread horses, and pulled candy all these six little years of my existence—I refused admittance? 'Twas a riddle past my solving, and I sank down on Aunt Marley's lap a little heap of disconsolate misery.

As I think of that day now, I remember that Uncle and Aunt Marley exchanged no words during the entire forenoon, and when I had been coaxed to run and play with Tray, the house-dog, while Auntie prepared the old-

fashioned twelve o'clock dinner, it seemed to me that the very sun would stop shining presently, everything seemed so strange and unnatural about the usually cheerful place. I had lost a baby sister the previous summer, and somehow Uncle Marley's house felt a good deal to-day as ours had done that morning, when baby lay in the dark front parlor, and everybody was so still and sorrowful.

Tray and I had found a sunny corner near the barn, and I was giving him the benefit of my gloomy cogitations, when Aunt Marley's sweet voice called me to dinner. Of course I hurried in—little boys are always hungry, you know—and when Auntie had washed my face and brushed my hair, and my spirits were fast reviving, owing to the fragrant effects attributable to the odor of baked beans and spicy pumpkin pies, I overheard Uncle telling her

in the pantry to "go and fetch Faith, he couldn't sit down without the child," and then Auntie trudged away to Faith's room, and though she did not know it, I followed quietly behind.

The door was tightly closed, and when Aunt Marley lifted the latch, I saw such a poor white creature lying among the pillows of Faith's bed, that my heart began to beat wildly as I wondered if she had not gone to meet baby in heaven. The girl was worn with anxiety and sleeplessness; there were great dark rings about her bright eyes; she looked like the spirit of herself.

"Don't come in, mother," she pleaded, "I can't see you just yet," and Aunt Marley went back to the kitchen, crying as if her heart would break.

After that there was a pretense of eating dinner, though I remember distinctly that the

two poor souls did not eat a mouthful, and then Uncle Marley said he must go over to the south pasture to see how the men were getting on with the sawing, and he shook hands with me in his hearty bluff fashion, and having given me a gold dollar for Christmas, was away over the meadows to the pasture.

The next day would be Christmas and as we lived some distance away, my father called for me early in the afternoon that we might reach home in time for the Christmas-eve festivities he always prepared for his children. When he came in ruddy with the cold, and slapping his big hands before the blazing fire to warm them, Aunt Marley only said, "O! Abner——" and sent me out with Tray again, that she might unburden her heart to her relative.

When I saw Faith again she was much as she had always been; a trifle paler, perhaps,

and not so merry, but she had taken Faith Marley's place in her father's house once more; the gentle, trusting, loving daughter, the dispenser of peace and cheerfulness, the girl whose shadowed life would tend to greater unselfishness, to deeper devotion, than even its sweet nature had ever known before.

It was years before I was old enough to understand, and then upon asking one day why Cousin Faith had never married, they told me of that dark Christmas-time in her life so long ago, when tidings had been received that her betrothed, then absent in a distant city, had proven faithless and wedded another. At first Faith had defied this statement. How could they speak of him so? He, the embodiment of all that was good and noble, he, the dearest, truest man in all the world! Had she known him all those years but to misjudge him, he

whose sympathies, whose tastes and affections had run so counterpart with hers, that they had long since become part of her own nature; he whose wife she had promised to be with her father's sanction, with all the hallowing influences that go to make pledges inviolate?

Alas, poor Faith! only the long desolate years, only the weary, watching, waiting hours might teach you how this could be. Nurtured in the bosom of affection, cultured in all those endearments known to simple, loving family life, what knew you of the ways men have to break women's trusting hearts? Of the long months of silence, the sickening hope deferred, and the cruel end pens cannot paint! The unloved, unloving after-years that come to overbalance that first glow of rosy loving trust! The empty, soulless life that stretches away over into the blankness of the grave, even

down to the misty shores of eternity! After a little time she never spoke to any one on the subject, but her mother knew that in her heart she rejected the cruel story, and looked with longing, patient eyes for the time when her lover would return. She always thought of him in the same tender loving way that had been her wont in the days of their betrothal. His gifts hung about her room. His presence was always with her. Her mother often came upon her in the twilight, and saw the sad, sweet eyes looking away so wistfully over the quiet landscape. Had he returned at any hour of the day or night, she would never have been surprised or startled. And when he came, there would be no questioning. Ah! no, she loved him too well for that! Some cruel thing had only detained him. Men cannot always come to the women

they love just when they like. His long absence would only make their meeting sweeter, would only tinge with deeper bloom their lives, and the lives of their children who would rise up in their grandfather's old age, and call him blessed! All this she thought, and yet I think she was quite sane on other subjects, and her practical voice more than once righted the affairs of the old farm, for her father was a very old man now, and no son had been born to him in the days of his early manhood.

And so the seasons came and went. The snow fell in the winter, and she could see him springing up the garden walk just as he used to do; sometimes he would see her waiting at the window, and then he would kiss his hand to her in the old gallant fashion while she stood blushing to open the door for him. The spring came, and the dried violets on the mantel re-

mind her of the May day they had roamed the hills, and gathered them. Summer brought the roses he had loved, and autumn the fruits she had been wont to serve him; all nature reminded her of him, and the loving, loyal heart never forgot him for a moment.

All this time Faith did not grow old. Age is reserved for those who despond. Faith hoped. There was something spiritual in this hoping against fate; a sort of uncanny trust in temporal things that made Aunt Marley shudder as she watched her. Would the scales ever fall from her eyes? And if they did, what then? This thought sometimes goaded her parents almost to distraction. Poor Aunt Marley! Dearest, most devoted of mothers, how has your heart been wrung at this very tranquillity of Faith's, which you feared would some time be shaken.

Time went on. I was now grown to young manhood, and during one of my college vacations spent at the home of a classmate in a distant city, I had met George Heathcote, my Cousin Faith's quondam lover. He had been a husband and father for years, but time had not dealt so kindly with him as it had with Faith. His hair was becoming silvered, and the furrows care had made in his face, were deep and prominent. He was a cool, crafty man of the world, this brazen image whom our sweet saint had set up in her heart to worship; a respected citizen, a man prominent in all public undertakings, a good husband, a devoted father, yet there were wrinkles in his face that told the story of Faith Marley's sorrow. He asked for her; with feeling too, I thought; and when I told him of that sweet, placid life, that deep content which quieted all things in its

great calm, he brushed his hand across his eyes that I might not see his tears. How he would have accounted for that strange freak which led to his inconstancy, I knew not then, nor have I ever known. It was too delicate a subject to touch upon, and I had too much regard for Faith, even to broach it in any way.

The woman's life went on like a poem; so sweet, so subdued, so unlike any other grief-stricken life with all its passionate out-breaks and brooding melancholies.

It had been Christmas time when Faith's trouble had come upon her. On Christmas eve, the eve of the very day I had spent at Uncle Marley's, fifteen long years ago, Heathcote was to have come to the farm-house to make arrangements for their bridal. He had not come, but tidings of his inconstancy had arrived early, and it was in the first prostration of

her grief and surprise that I had seen Faith Marley, that long-ago winter's day. After that, Aunt Marley said, Faith had always seemed to regard Christmas eve as a peculiar anniversary. At this season of the year she would become merry as of old, and with roses blooming in her cheeks, would fly about the old house, brightening it with branches of evergreen and holly; polishing the great brass knockers until they reflected her sweet face; putting a picture here, a ribbon there; airing the quaint old rooms which had not been used since the days of her early girlhood, and which, to any less resolute soul, had been full of ghosts long before.

There was a room in the house that had been George Heathcote's when he had come to the farm for the holidays or the Sabbath; for Uncle Marley had been the boy's guardian through

all the years of his early orphanage, and this long-unused room Faith used to put in order every Christmas. The week following my visit at Heathcote's, I arrived at Uncle Marley's just as Faith was putting the finishing touches to this room. It was in perfect order, from the snowy counterpane to the spotless Swiss curtains at the window.

"Isn't it pretty, Cousin Johnnie?" she said. No one ever grew any older in Faith's way of thinking; if her life stood still so must everybody else's.

"One gets just drowsy enough to sleep well here, from the dripping of the eaves; and I have fed the snow-birds all winter under this window, so they will come and waken George with their cherry voices in the morning!"

I had never heard my Cousin Faith mention that name before, and a shiver thrilled through

me as I looked at the slender figure with its burden of thirty-five years, and the now unnaturally bright eyes looking out so longingly over the hills. Aunt Marley said she had spoken to her in the same way too, to-day; there was something strange in all this. Was the end approaching? Surely the hallucination could not last always. The physicians said Faith must eventually awaken to reality, or else lose her reason entirely. These, then, were the cruel alternatives that sweet soul must choose between; this the price her love had cost her, the pitiless reward for all those years of constancy. And yet when I look back over this sad story, it seems to me that Faith was mercifully spared much suffering, which must have been hers, had her senses been keen enough to realize her true situation. Very possibly, too, her character had not been the

lovely one that it was, had the intense pain realism would have brought, entered her heart to corrode and tarnish its pure trust. Always unselfish, she had been doubly so since her bereavement, and though her heart was far away with the man she had loved, her hands were never idle in preparing comforts for her aged parents.

Uncle Marley had become very childish these last few years, and the more feeble he became the more he and Faith seemed to understand each other. I have seen her brush his hair and arrange his toilet, singing softly to him as she did so, until the old gray head bowed itself in sleep upon her shoulder. At these times she never moved lest she should disturb him, but sat quietly in her chair, with that dreamy look in her soft eyes, always looking, looking into space. On such occasions I have often im-

agined that Faith fancied her father to be her child; a fancy strengthened by a gentle rocking motion she always used in soothing him to sleep, and by the cradle songs she always sang him. All these phases and imageries had become as familiar to Aunt Marley as the oldest household word. She was a woman of quick perceptions, and Faith had been her study for years. Dear Aunt Marley! As I look up from my writing to-day, and behold you seated at my fireside, my little son established on your knee, there is a sorrow in your wrinkled face that passeth all understanding. How few of us go down to our graves fully realizing how our mothers have suffered for us! The very poetry of nature was herein typified. Faith's sorrow was more to Aunt Marley than it was to Faith herself! The mother knew every changing expression of the girl's face, and

sorrowed over it in her secret soul. But to return to that Christmas eve. I had early decided to remain at Uncle Marley's over night, as I knew my presence would in some degree reassure Aunt Marley, and might also have some effect on Faith, who never left her seat by the window after the first approach of night. In vain I tried to engage her in conversation, faint smiles were her only replies; although once she laid her hand on my head, and apologized to me for not having been able to see me in the morning. At first I did not catch her meaning, but when I saw Aunt Marley start and shudder as if an adder had stung her, I knew that Faith's mind had gone back to that day fifteen years before, when I had seen her in the first paroxysm of her grief.

"All that is over now, Johnnie," she said presently. "He is coming soon. No, mother,

don't drop the curtains; I can't see if you do that!" And so Aunt Marley tied the curtains back again, with the fresh blue ribbon Faith had put there in the morning, that the poor soul might look up and down the long white road, and imagine she heard the sound of wheels.

The place was very still; there was nothing save the nervous click, click of Aunt Marley's knitting-needles, and the ticking of the old clock to disturb the stillness, and when I glanced over at the pale figure crouched at the window, with the clasped hands, and earnest, eager eyes, there was a ghastliness about the scene and the silence which I can never forget. Who knows, mused I, how this night will end for Faith, for with all her hoping she had never been so intent on Heathcote's coming as she was to-night. Would her warm imagina-

tion drive him to these gates? Would fancy waft him to this loving heart to which he had so long been a stranger? Mayhap sleep would come and with her rosy wings brush out these cob-web fancies. Pray heaven it might. Thus I mused while Aunt Marley's shining needles clicked on, and the tall clock in the corner struck the dragging hours.

The features of the snowy landscape reflected by the bright rays of the moon, streamed in through the parted curtains and lay so many ghastly shadows on the floor. Instinctively I began to grow nervous, and having risen to mend the fire, approached the window opposite Faith. Was I dreaming? No. I rubbed my eyes. I was here in the flesh. I, John Marley, home from college on a vacation, spending the night at Uncle Marley's that I might bear my poor Aunt company in her

anxiety for Faith. All this I experienced in an instant, but not until I had seen a sleigh dash up to the gate, and my Cousin Faith open the door, and fly down the walk like a spirit, her fair hair coming unbound as she ran, making her look in her light robes like something supernatural. Still, half-doubting the evidence of our senses, Aunt Marley and I followed speedily in Faith's footsteps. Two men were lifting a man's body from the sleigh, and Faith was chafing its cold hands, and moaning over it, as she had never moaned in all the years of her desolation.

They carried him to the house, Faith leading the way to the little room she had arranged in the morning, and when the candles were brought in I knew that the man who lay before us was George Heathcote. Driving a spirited horse through that part of the country

on a mission of business, he had become paralyzed with the cold, and the animal had plunged forward into a ravine, throwing him upon a bed of sharp rocks, and inflicting serious wounds from which he would never recover.

As we stood there in the dim light of the candles, after the physician had dressed the wounds, I wondered if Faith, who never left his side, recognized the changes time had made in the man she had loved with such singular constancy. I do not believe that a single feature of his face had changed to her, nor that she took any heed of the long heavy beard he had grown, or of the furrows in the brow she had known smooth as a child's.

Once only she left him, and then I heard her awakening her father to tell him that George had come, and she feared he was seriously hurt.

She was quite rational on the subject of Heathcote's great danger. She refused to let any one else care for him, and took the doctor's directions quite as lucidly as would the ablest, most experienced nurse.

The man had been thrown into a heavy stupor, from which he only roused once before he died. Faith had been giving him a cordial, and we gazed at her with swimming eyes as she lifted his heavy head to her shoulder, and laid her warm soft cheek against the one already stiffening in death.

Was it divine, or was it but an illustration of the doctrine of compensation? who shall say,—that faint gleam of consciousness which came to George Heathcote in the last hours of his life? For an instant his eyes opened; he saw her; knew that it was she, the love of his boyhood. His pale lips murmured, "Faith, forgive."

One moment he pressed her to his heart, and this was the end. The man sank back upon his pillow, dead ; and when we went to him we found that Faith had fainted.

And thus, while kindly hands performed the last sad offices for the man who had so suddenly gone out of life, the sombre King of Shadows hovered about our own sweet angel, and when another sunset came, our hearts were breaking with a new anguish, for the sweet soul of Faith Marley had gone out to meet her lover's, on that long last journey from whence no traveler returns.

SUNDAY MORNINGS.

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HAT a hallowed quiet seems to pervade the atmosphere Sunday mornings. Tired Nature seems to have arrayed herself for the occasion, and if you have pitched your tent anywhere outside a mining camp, the distinctive characteristics of the day will impress themselves upon you more earnestly perhaps, than anything else has done during the whole of the past week. You deliberately leave your bed at no very early hour, and stealthily drawing your curtains aside, look dreamily into the street below your windows, investing each passer-by with an interest entirely foreign to

that which you feel in him ordinarily. Somehow the street seems cleaner than usual; the milkman does not come so early to-day, and the numerous squads of small boys and girls who troop by to the Sabbath schools, are certainly better cleansed and clothed than they were yesterday, when you saw them bound for the park, with those immense long-tailed kites in their hands.

Your Catholic neighbors, good souls, are earlier in their devotions than other churchgoers, and are always distinguishable by the bright colors in their dress, and, often among the younger ones, by their clear pink complexions and deep violet eyes, for young Irish beauty is like a mountain flower just kissed by the dawn, so fresh and sweet and simple is it, so wholly unspotted by affectation or a knowledge of the world. Sometimes the priest makes

one of this little group, and it not uncommonly occurs to my lady behind the blinds, that he is an exceptionally handsome fellow, and that the admiring glances of the young women fall more than once upon the strong limbs and massive shoulders of him who is set over them as spiritual adviser and teacher.

The other church people will not sally forth for two hours yet, and as the street scene grows less interesting, you involuntarily turn your attention inside, begin to wonder vaguely if breakfast is nearly ready, and set about preparing your toilet in a deliciously lazy manner you would never think of using on a week day.

The household is comparatively at rest this morning, at least there is none of that hurry and bustle, together with scraping of brooms and rolling of chairs and tables, which your landlady sees fit to inaugurate ordinarily.

Sunday rest and relaxation have come over everybody and everything, and it is a blessed feature in the economy of nature that it is so. Everyday life is such a battle with adverse circumstances that our physical organisms, if nothing else, demand Sunday respite, and so strong is the habit or custom, so necessary the relief to exhausted faculties, that Sunday morning brings with it a measure of hushed tranquility, which is the very essence of perfect peace.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.



It has been deemed best that the old home should be given up, and that its aged master and mistress, now unfit for cares and responsibilities of any kind, should retire to a life of ease and comfort within the family of a near and dear relative, whose pleasure it will be to make the remainder of their days happy and comfortable. Nothing could be kinder than the relative's intentions, nothing pleasanter than her spacious home; and yet grandpa's heart aches bitterly as he goes about over his broad lands, and realizes that they are henceforth to pass into the hands of strangers, to whom they can have but a moneyed value at best, and who will dispose

of them again, as soon as they can do so advantageously.

'Tis forty long years since grandpa's energy and industry first came to bear upon what was then wild, rugged soil. Little by little he saw vegetation rise where rude desolation once greeted his friendly eyes; day after day he made one improvement after another—a fence here, a field there, in another place a broad pasture for his stock, and just back of the house he planted with his own hands that noble grove, which has so long since proven such a kindly shelter from summer's heat and winter's cold.

It is a warm spring afternoon, and grandpa is making his last round before leaving the old home for his new quarters in the city, which he is not at all sure he will like, or ever be able to regard as home. He leans heavily on his

staff, for he has not entirely withstood the enemies of old age, and his lameness is very hard to bear at times, though he never complains, and always proudly scorns any offer of sympathy. Long years of toil and labor have bent his form, but his noble old head, with its silvery hair, is still proudly erect, and his keen blue eyes and long white beard would delight the heart of an artist, by furnishing him a type which he had long sought. He goes slowly about the place, looking at everything so quietly and wistfully, much as a mother looks at her stalwart sons who are about to leave her.

He approaches the low, rambling, weather-beaten old barn, and his mind goes back to the day when the antiquated structure was "raised." How strong and young he and his friends were then! How broken and bent now with the snows of many winters.

The old place has a charm for grandpa that none other ever can have. It's perfect beauty is the work of his hands. He fashioned it in its infancy; to his untiring efforts all this luxurious verdure, all this complete arrangement is due. He has the same pride in it that an author has in his book, or a painter in his picture. Here among these peaceful scenes he spent the days of his early manhood; here he brought his young wife home, when her cheeks were as rosy and her eyes as bright as any young lassie's in the land to-day. From this home, those who have learned to call him by the loving name of father, have gone out to their various battles with the world. No, it is not strange he should not like to go, nor that he should linger so long upon the old threshold to which for so many years he has bade his friends welcome. His body will depart from the old

haunts; the places that knew him so well will know him no more on earth; but his soul will hover about the old homestead until the angels call his lonely spirit to its eternal rest.



MY SKETCH BOOK.

MY SKETCH BOOK.



If you will come and sit with me for an hour, we will go about the world in a show-box.

You will have to be very patient, of course, for even though fancy's pictures are thrown in by the brush of memory, they are yet of that dreamy indistinct nature that brooks no haste, and the leaves of my sketch-book must be turned as slowly and musingly as if they were fabled pages of some book of elf-land.

Then, too, I may as occasion requires, conjure up by the aid of my wand, which to you is simply a black lead pencil, such very old

scenes and places that the pictures will be lost in gloom for a little time, and you will consequently see nothing but darkness.

Out of this chaos I will undertake however, to evolve something that may please you this warm May night, as you are resting from the labors of the day, your children on your knees.

Speaking of children, the first picture in the book is that of a child, for surely children are the beginning of everything that is pure and beautiful in life. This picture is of a wan little face with great sad eyes which seem always filled with tears. They are those of a baby who is laid to rest on a pillow, while a fond mother just in the prime of life bends over the dainty thing to soothe and encourage it with loving mother-words. The baby is sick, but the picture is nevertheless a very pretty one, so filled it is with the essence of all that goes

to make life worth living; for I think a mother's love is the theme the angels sing most 'round the great white throne.

Turning slowly on, we come to a page where an old white farm-house is set in the midst of thick green shade; masses of purple and scarlet flowers are nodding sleepily in the warm sunshine, and from the open door is heard the sweet low song of the housewife as she goes about her tasks.

Back of the house lie great golden fields of grain, and the click, click of the reaper is the only sound that disturbs the perfect stillness of the landscape. Dotted here and there across the yellow field stand the harvesters, men of brawn and muscle, whose dark sun-burned arms would pass well as studies for a bronze model; as noon approaches, a little figure with a sweet primrose face peeping demurely forth

from a white sun-bonnet, comes tripping over the field with a willow basket on her arm, and one there is—a great sturdy blue-eyed young fellow—who hastens on to meet her and relieve her of her load. Let us hope that he will lift life's burdens for her as willingly as he lifts the basket to-day, and that the light will shine quite as brightly over their future, as it does over the yellow grain fields ripening there in the summer sun.

The next picture we come upon is that of a mountain pass; ten thousand feet above the sea man's ingenuity has carried us, and here we are bowling along among the clouds, with the everlasting purple hills on every side, and the sun just sinking to rest over there in his crimson bed.

The silence is so great up here, that one can think of nothing save the unfathomed mysteries

of life and death. Left thus alone with creation we realize more than ever our insignificance, yet are forced to contemplate the intense power of feeling we have within.

Our party alights and stands gazing about the boundless landscape. Ah! how difficult it is to breathe. How infinitely larger the world is away up here among the clouds. We are traversing a narrow track of railroad, and it seems nature must have provided just this much space for it to occupy, as there is not room enough left to allow the passage of a wheelbarrow; but there are chasms—bottomless chasms it seems to us—and great rocky precipices whose wooded sides are sloping down so beautifully to death in the vast rocks and rushing streams below; there are hills and hills, rocks and rocks; trees as green as emeralds, and that great boundless stretch of crim-

son sunset over the whole. Oh! vastness! thou art here, these are thy tents and tabernacles; this silence the language of thy great bursting heart! Surely in these dim aisles man's nature may expand, and truly I think such is the case, for here are two brothers separated for thirty years by cruel distance and more cruel misunderstanding, pressing each other's hands, and smiling into each other's eyes the long ago smiles of their boyhood.

The train has reached a little station—it seems there are stations in the clouds as well as on the earth—and the station-master, a little old uncouth figure in mountain attire, comes limping out of his wooden dwelling to hoist an old red flag, as is his wont, and presently it seems the poor old cripple is transformed, for the portly well dressed stranger who alights from the train to grasp his hand, is no other than his

rich twin brother, who has come all the long way from England to see him.

Smile on, poor little crippled station-master! Don for a time the garments of civilization, and descend into the pleasant valleys, there to mingle a brief day with the fellow-creatures whose faces and manners you have so nearly forgotten; revel for an hour in music, in drama, in books, in pictures; drink your soul's fill of all that men call good in crowded cities, but forget not to return to your cloud-land home, where every breeze that blows is fraught with purity, and where nature's everlasting silence is the solemn benediction of creation.

Turning another page, we have soon descended into a mine, apparently as far within the bowels of the earth as we have just been into the clouds. Down, down, down, we are lowered by a powerful rope, our vehicle being

a mighty bucket of oak and iron, our only light a sickly candle held in the hand.

The farther we go the darker it becomes, and the cavernous walls through which we are passing, seem damp with the slime of ages; at times the darkness becomes impenetrable, but we finally arrive at something we imagine to be the bottom, where men are working with picks at the cavernous walls. More sickly candles stuck everywhere like pale eruptions on the sides of a dark volcano—more men hurrying hither and thither, leading damp, unhealthy, wretched lives, their faces gleaming through the darkness like those of pale weary ghosts. Few words pass between them, as in this way much of the noisome air is excluded from the lungs.

Little cars loaded with ores are coming and going all the time, drawn by patient mules

over narrow tram-ways; one man is firing a blast, and presently we hear the tremendous report, when it seems to us that all the powers of the lower depths are let loose for the destruction of the world. There is nothing pleasant in this subterranean cavern or in that which is at once the abode of what is both the golden curse and blessing of the world; through it all there is a strong suggestion of the horrible struggles men must always undergo who work for money. Dark unhealthy place, abode of disease, of severe labor and often of temptation, crime and death, we leave you, and seek once more the upper air. Ah! never has that intangible ether seemed so sweet, never have heaven's rays smiled down upon us half so fondly.

If you want to appreciate a sunshiny day, pass an hour among the sickly horrors of a mine.

Turn over the page. Why, what have we here? An African desert over which the summer heats are pouring with such a degree of fierceness, that it would seem king Sol had some idea of annihilating the swarthy Arabian soldiers who are squatting about in the sand, half naked, although armed to the teeth. Tents there are in long white rows; and sand, sand, nothing but hot, white sand as far as the eye can reach.

It is the eve of a great battle, but it cannot be said that the thought of war has many terrors for these fierce men, who squat about the tents in strange fantastic attire. War is to them the breath of life. Long immured to battle, they, and their noble steeds tethered there, at the rear of the tents, think no more of a hot engagement than they do of a breakfast on their native house-tops.

A glance at them shows you they are born cut-throats; noble figures they are, too, there in the strange contrast of the white burning sand, and the vast background of snowy tents. The Arabic commander, a tall man in a European costume, paces back and forth, time after time, through the length of his spacious tent, and wishes, from the bottom of his heart, for sunset, and an abatement of the heat; the greater part of his life he has spent in Europe, and he dares not expose his body to the fierce rays of the sun, as his more hardened countrymen can do. He is nervous to-night, too; you see there is an English prisoner in the Arabic camp, who is to be shot dead for some trivial offense, to-morrow at day-break, and although the commander is obliged to see that the deed is done, his heart, hard as it may be, is bitterly against it, and cries "reprieve,"

against all his better military judgment. They have met before, these two men, at Oxford, where they were both students, and once in a tour through Italy. "It is hard," muses the commander, "to shoot down a man whom one knows, like a dog," but he knows there is no escape, knows what rigid penalty a man must pay for commanding a heathen army; and so his weary walk goes on, and he does not pause until a shadow falls in the doorway, and his name is pronounced in thrilling pleading accents.

A girl, small and dark and lovely—a girl with a piquant face, and great burning black eyes, her slight form clad in some scarlet thing that is floating at her saddle, flings the reins of her horse, who is streaked with foam and dust, to a soldier, and throws herself, half-fainting, into the commander's arms. The horse sinks

down there in the sand and closes his eyes. The zouaves say he cannot live till morning. She has ridden the noble animal to death.

The officer lays the girl on his own soft couch, bids an attendant bathe her face and give her cooling drink, and calls a slave to care for the dying horse. The girl is Cosette, the brave French child, whom they have long since made the daughter of their army; the girl who has ridden at the head of long lines of troops through all the hottest engagements of the war; the girl whose voice has long been heard among the swarthy hosts, and whose military tactics and great presence of mind, are equal to those of any commander in Africa.

The officer is deeply touched to see her in so weak a condition. What can bring her here, on this mad ride of life and death? Has she been pursued by the enemy?

"No," she gasps out, she can talk now, thanks to the iced wine and the great fans that are always moving in the tent. "It is about—about the English prisoner, she has come to speak." She has known him many years. He is a good man. He did not mean that trivial insult he had accidentally given the African army. Oh! no; she knew it was not in the commander's power to revoke the sentence, but there was always a clause in those savage death sentences of the desert which read: "Unless another will die in the prisoner's stead." Here her eyes kindled: "I have come to die for the young Englishman," she says, as quietly as one might say, "I am come to dine."

"Because you love him?" the officer asks.

"Because I love him," Cosette replies. And thus it is that when the morning breaks over the tents, and the burning sand reflects a

thousand dusky shadows in its white deeps, the girl with the piquant face is brought forward, and shot dead through the heart, in the face of the assembled army.

Dead with all the sins of her loose immoral life upon her pretty head; dead before the sands of time had yet doled out one pitiful score of years; dead 'ere she had known good from evil; dead for the man she loved.

And I think if there is a heaven, she is there, for to me she is the noblest picture in all my sketch-book, and far away as are the time and place, across the long lapse of years, away off there in that white African desert, I can feel the pressure of those little dark hot hands, and catch a glimpse of that sweet unselfish face, which to me is lovelier than that of any saint. What a vivid picture it is, that sketch of the great army beneath the burning sun, and that

poor child come as a deliverer to her lover! But let us turn the page. The next sketch is a scene in the black forests of Louisiana. It is night; owls are hooting in the branches of great trees; poisonous vines and thick underbrush crawl along the ground; there is not even a path through the forest, so dense are the noisome creepers. There is no moon, and a young traveler misled by the delusive *ignus fatuus*, has lost his way, and sunk to his waist in a treacherous marsh there among the trees.

He is terrified beyond expression. The bright eyes of wild beasts glare at him from all parts of the forest; anon he hears the deep coarse sound of their voices, and he shudders and moans, and cries aloud for help. Rattlesnakes go by with that dread whirring sound which in so many cases means instant death; great frightful birds flap their wings in the

black sky; it is a time of horror and despair. As the night advances, he manages to extricate himself from the marsh, but is unable to make his way out of the forest, and so spends a most wretched night there under the trees. He is wrought up to a highly nervous state, and during the long night, evil spirits, long since banished to these swamps, come to him, and seek to drag him far away to darker haunts. It is one of them you see there in the picture, that shadowy being there, in a sable garment. These are the spirits of murderers, of thieves, of defrauders, of assassins; of villains whose crimes were so intangible as to avoid the clutches of the law, but whose spirits are now the blackest of them all.

Oh! what a horrible night. How the owls hoot, how the wild eyes glare, and how those stealthy spirits steal back and forth through

the poisonous foliage. The traveler imagines his dark locks to be turning white with terror, and instinctively puts up his hand to his head—just then the blessed rays of morning break over the forest; the beasts retire to their lairs and the owls to their accustomed hiding-places in the trees. Of a sudden, the spirits of evil stalk no longer amid the woody aisles, and an ebony teamster, driving a pair of homely oxen, comes riding into view on the traveled road, which the youth now sees so distinctly, and which to him has been so near and yet so far all the long night.

Oh! joy, the negro is singing. His rich voice rings out in a plantation melody, and quite puts to rout all the darksome influences of the sombre shadowy place. The boy springs to his feet, shouts with all his might, glad to use his lungs again. The negro hears

him, and calls "whoa," to the oxen, in a tone they never fail to understand; rolls the whites of his eyes, in a manner expressive of how fearful a night in that lonely place would be to him, and, hospitably making room for the benighted traveler, drives quickly away from the sombre scene.

And so the young man and the negro travel on together, and I am sure if the traveler lives to be a very old man, he can never forget the horrors of that night in the black forest.

Turning another page, we come suddenly upon a gorgeous sunset, and the rippling water of a great bay. Many sails dot the dimpled water; on the decks, bands of wandering musicians awake sweet notes from instruments which, judging by their appearance, have seen the sun and storm of every civilized country in the world; swarthy Italians these vagrants are,

dirty, uncouth, lazy, sprawling about the deck, their dark figures set off by gaudy fringes and fantastic rags. What a strange group they are! How ragged, self-satisfied and happy.

The little boat is taking a sunset sail to Staten Island, where the great steep banks are so green and mossy, and the queer little streets so sleepy and quiet. One can almost imagine himself as he walks along, to be the sole person in the place. Presently you approach a tiny pie-shop; the door is open, but there is no one within; rows of sleepy sodden pies are ranged along the dusty shelves, and a dozen bottles of sweet cider complete the stock of this not very enterprising establishment. You ring a cracked bell, and after an interval of some five minutes, a little old woman appears in snowy cap and silver spectacles, looking at you wonderingly over the tops of them, as if to

say, "can you possibly want pie?" and all the time she is handing one down from the shelves and wrapping it up with an old woman's nicety, her expression is plainly one of protest, that you should have disturbed her from that fragrant cup of tea she was engaged in sipping in the parlor back of the shop.

As you leave the place, you hear the old lady trotting briskly back to her evening refreshment, and you go and throw yourself on the pier, where the Italians, comfort-loving fellows, are sprawling before you, and you gaze out over the bay and watch the reflection of the sunset colors in the clear water, and throw bits of pie you have just purchased to the greedy fishes, who are, by far, the most energetic beings about the island; and, as the twilight deepens, you take your place leisurely in the returning ferry, and give yourself up to

reverie, as you steam back to the city, and the faint sound of music over the water lulls your senses to quiet repose.

Turning another page, a country school-house bursts upon our view; here the old desks, cut with a hundred names and dates; the cracked black-board, and the teacher's rickety chair, all serve to remind you of the days that are gone. How you languished when a child, seated on those high stiff benches, all the long hot afternoons. How the sun used to beat in at those curtainless windows, and the schoolma'am's ferule used to descend upon your small brown hand. How much you used to wish you were a man, that you might escape these tortures, and live in the green fields.

Well, have you found consolation in the green fields of life? Have you found aught to

console you for the loss of your sweet dreamy youth, for the crash of the idols that fell all too soon?

Let us turn on. Why, what is this? A marble palace; one apartment in azure, one in amethyst, one in dark variegated gems, and one in the exact colors of that South American lapis lazuli you admire so much. Marble halls, marble stairways, marble mantels, marble floors, and broad marble steps like those leading up out of the water to the Venetian palaces. Such a wealth of magnificent marbles! Such a profusion of it, as if it might be had for the asking, or as if the builder had the gold of kings at his command.

Is it an enchanted palace? No; it is only the city hall at Baltimore; but it is grand and spacious enough for the abode of royalty. Is there any woe, want or suffering in the land,

that might be wholly relieved with one-tenth of the price of those costly marbles that go to make up this proud edifice? Perhaps so, but could you find it in your heart to destroy this temple of beauty, this priceless thing of stone and marble that will endure for centuries, a monument to American taste and enterprise?

As an easy way of answering a difficult question, let us turn another page, whereon the picture is that of a shining river on a June day, with two little steamers plying up and down. The day is as brilliant as sun and summer-time can make it; the green banks on either side, remind one of the land of the shamrock; away off there among clusters of green trees, white cottages are half hidden in the shade, and an occasional gleam of vivid scarlet, tells of the flowers that spring so naturally from this luxuriant soil.

Then, too, there are vast stone mansions set in deep parks of living green, with massive stone gates to which huge lions are guarding the entrance; here and there a comfortable family carriage rolls slowly up a long avenue, and the sweet melody of children's voices rings out in the clear air.

All this we see as we lounge about the deck of the little steamer, which goes paddling swiftly along through the bright water. The captain is a cheery Yankee, with a brown face and a brisk air, and smiles so pleasantly when he lifts his blue cap, that we are forced to like him from that time on, and doubtless succeed in making ourselves felt in the number of questions we propound, if nothing else.

Who are these, we ask, as a half dozen stalwart fellows in a uniform of coarse blue and white bed-ticking, appear on the deck with

pails and brushes, and begin to scour the little craft from bow to stern.

“What, you don’t know?” the captain says in surprise. “Don’t you know you are on a prison boat, and that every servant and official in the whole crew, except myself, are reformed convicts, serving out a probationary term on board?”

In spite of ourselves, we cannot help shuddering a little at this, the day is so bright, and crime, with her attendant punishments, seems so far away. We knew, of course, when we took passage for Blackwell, that we were on the way to explore a colony of criminals, but a steamer stocked with convicts—that was almost beyond our comprehension.

“Come down stairs,” the captain says pleasantly. “See the kitchens and the cooks.”

We follow him down a narrow stairway and

descend into the whitest and brightest of kitchens, where a plain, savoury dinner is roasting, boiling and sputtering on a shining range, and two women in clean bed-tick dresses, with hair neatly combed, and narrow white collars about their necks, are superintending all the roasting, boiling and sputtering of the long range.

The women make us little jerky polite bows. Poor souls! I think their dark, pinched faces show more ignorance than guilt, and the captain tells us as we go up-stairs, that they as well as the entire crew are docile as lambs.

Everywhere we go, men and boys in this same garb, are employed in some capacity about the steamer; the cooks, the engineers, the deck hands, the porters, all wear the same badge of degradation and servitude, and yet methinks their faces are not unhappy, so great

a power for good are discipline and right living. These poor things, in all likelihood, never had so excellent a home, as this poor shabby little floating prison; never had such kind, firm words as they have from this sun-burned captain; never had such appetizing food as they have from those generous kettles in that white kitchen, and so, reflecting on all this, sad that crime exists, yet bowing before the sage wisdom of our glorious government, which provides cleanly homes and healthy food for these poor creatures, we dream away the June hours on that little prison steamer, while the blue smiling heavens bend above us, and the green banks keep receding in the distance.

There is so much sadness here, in spite of all the air of cheeriness and order, that we have little to say to each other, but remain sunk in reverie until Randall Island is reached, and

fifty convicts are brought on board and embarked for the Blackwell prison.

One, two, three. The captain gives the signal, and the poor wretches of all ages, colors and sexes, come clanking their chains over the gang-way, keeping as perfect time as a regiment of soldiers. How sullen they are. Great burley fellows for the most part, with arms and limbs that have defied bolt and bar for many a long year; large muscular hands theirs are, that have picked many a lock, and some have doubtless been stained with blood.

Truly this is a pitiful sight, and there is a hush like that of death over the boat, as they silently enter, and are conducted to their places in the lower part of the boat.

But while their chains are clanking, the sun in heaven is shining, and when at the next island, a rude box containing the dead body of

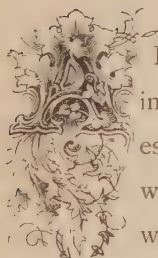
a child, is lowered into the boat by means of ropes, those dark savage fellows, cut-throats, thieves, assassins, pause in their long strides to lift their caps one and all, with military precision, in the presence of the common enemy.

And as I gaze on the poor wretches, and think of the little weary soul there in the box, who will never know pain nor want, nor misery, it seems to me that the blue sky is sending a smile of love down into the hard faces of the convicts, while the little box is lowered into a cool place in the steamer.

Two hours later, there is a tiny green grave in a shady nook at Blackwell, which marks the resting place of the little stranger.

AN AUGUST VISION.

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FORLORN cabin situated within one of those dry, treeless stretches of country known in the central western states as "barrens," a man with a grizzly beard, alternately smoking and dozing just outside the door on a rude wooden bench; a child playing in the yellow sand which surrounds the curb-stone; over all, the fierce rays of the pitiless August sun, whose steady glare, unbroken by the slightest foliage of any kind, descends in fiery wrath upon the luckless men and beasts who populate this unfertile section. A little drouth

acts as a famine here and reduces the inhabitants to the most pitiful conditions of disease and want. The terrible heat throws a fearful torpor over everything. Dogs go mad, and men not infrequently commit acts of desperation and violence, after a long dry season, when their efforts have availed them nothing, and with winter fast approaching, they find they have no means of subsistence or support.

The man moans and murmurs in his sleep, and the child, alarmed by the strange sounds, drops her handful of sand, and sets up a long, low wail, digging her little bare toes into the hot dry soil, and wiping away the tears with the hem of her coarse, soiled, little dress, which is the only one she has in the world.

Within the house naught is heard save the buzzing 'of the rapacious flies, which blacken every thing with their obnoxious presence.

Wholly unmindful of the wretched disturbances these annoying insects create, as well as of the pitiful cries of the child, a pale, fragile woman crouches silently in a dirty corner of the room, her hands clasped and her eyes fixed on vacancy, with that dull, hopeless look which trouble always, sorrow never brings. Her apathy is perfect. She is as wholly unconscious of her surroundings as if she were a thousand miles from that cursed spot, which has thrown a blight upon her life from which she can never hope to recover.

Honor, pride in well-doing, has been this woman's motto through life. Her face is delicate and sensitive, even in its advanced age and in all its wretched setting of squalid misery. From her youth up she has abhorred wrong actions, and kept them at bay, as men do their mortal enemies. And now, this burn-

ing, sickening day, in the midst of these terrible heats, there is wafted to her a hot and poisonous breeze which tells her that she is the mother of a convicted thief!

This is the message which has traveled across the almost desert sands of the country she hates with such bitter intensity; this is the recompense for all the long years of care and pain, which only mothers know and suffer. A steely hardness has entered her heart. In her stern judgment she finds no palliation, no expiating circumstances, no lingering tenderness for the guilty wretch who, after all, is the child of her young love—the living pledge of all her life of constancy and devotion.

The man rouses himself from his stupor, enters the doorway, and gazes at her with a strange mixture of half savage tenderness and pity; but she never moves a muscle or un-

clasps her frail, thin hands from the position she has held them in since morning.

"Marthy, wife," he says, brokenly, "won't ye speak to me, won't ye say he's not altogether to blame? Its hard to go hungry, Marthy, and—and—."

There is a sound of hoofs on the road outside, and the woman, though she does not reply, looks wearily out at the narrow doorway, but turns coldly away as she beholds a messenger, covered with dust and foam from his long hot ride. She crosses the room without speaking to him, but he follows her, and whispers hoarsely in her ear, "There was a suicide in our town to-day—your daughter."

Her apathy is broken, there is a faint shriek, a cry to heaven for mercy, and the much-tried woman moans and struggles in her last sharp agony.

The country side is rife with dreadful gossip; the sunset sky seems red with blood; the fearful heat like unto that of hades. There is a sharp ring at the door bell, and I awake from my horrible afternoon nap to find that the servant has fastened both sets of blinds so closely that the atmosphere is suffocating to oppression, and my brain is in a whirl of fevered heat. I dash a glass of ice-water over my face, and advance to meet my guest, my nerves still thrilling with pity for the poor wretches who, thank heaven, existed only in the extravagant fancy of my vision.

COUNTRY LIFE IN WINTER.

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 BREAKFAST, a meal that quite puts to shame a fashionable luncheon, is had before daylight, and by nine o'clock on a snowy winter morning the house has been put in order, the milk taken care of, and the good wife and daughters, with smoothed hair and fresh calico aprons, have settled quietly down to the sewing or patch work, with which the family basket is always full and running over, for idle hands have no place in the economy of farm life. Gorgeous bed quilts are always on the way, and she who has not a store of them is considered a shiftless, worthless sort of girl,

who has no reason to expect a husband, and indeed, is not thought deserving of one. Grandmother always knits, as her eyesight is failing, and her practiced hands can almost "heel and toe" a stocking in the dark; and then there are always three or four calico dresses in process of making, for these women are their own dressmakers, and the little low-ceiled bedrooms are always hung full of first, second and third-best calicos, which are donned with as great a respect for occasion as a city belle shows when she dresses for a dinner, a reception, or an evening party.

The women have not been settled around the big wood-fire long, when they are joined by the men, who have done the "feeding," which is about the sum total of their day's labor, when the weather is very cold. They come in stamping like a regiment of soldiers,

and while one of them draws up the heavy well-sweep for mother, another one lights a candle and repairs to the cellar, from which he presently ascends with a pitcher of sparkling cider, almost as good as champagne, and answering just the same purpose for these simple folk, many of whom have not as much as heard of the former beverage.

If the stage got in over the bad roads yesterday, Goodman Farmer has his weekly papers to-day, and does not have to give hurried glances over them, while he scalds his mouth with blue-milk coffee, getting just about half the coffee and the paper swallowed, when he is obliged to drop them both to catch the early car to the city. No indeed, eating in the country is too serious a business to slight in that way, and besides, there is plenty of time for everything. Who ever thought of hurry-

ing? The idea has certainly never occurred to him; and only a fire, which is a rare occurrence in these rural solitudes, could induce him to so rash an action. He reads the paper long and thoroughly, not an advertisement escapes him, and when he has finished, his quiet wife stretches out her hand for it, and eagerly hunts the story column in a manner that would go straight to the heart of the struggling young author who wrote it, could he see the avidity with which it is seized upon. If the editor has seen fit to crowd out the story this week, her countenance falls, and her pleasure for the day is spoiled.

There is not a book store for ten miles around, and when they do go "to town," John Thomas says kindly, "I wouldn't spend money for books, Maria; buy yourself a gown or a pair of shoes."

And so the winter days go by. The store-house contains a barrel of nuts, and another of pop-corn, and if it is baking day, the men huddle about the stove, and complacently test the fragrant cakes and pies as they come out of the oven deliciously brown and appetizing.

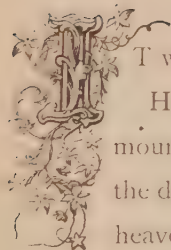
If the weather is not too cold for the horses, they decide upon a visit to a friend some miles distant, and when all are packed up in shawls and blankets, the big bob-sled, surmounted by the wagon-box, draws up before the house, and the party clamber in promiscuously, and settle down upon the soft fragrant hay which makes as soft a cushion as one could wish for. O! there is nothing so charming as this jolly way of sleigh-riding, which is a thousand times more smooth and satisfactory than bumping along in a modern high-backed cutter. If you are cold, just bury your head in "mother's lap"

and your feet in the section of hay-stack under you, and you won't be so long.

The horses feel good because they have nothing to do at this season of the year, and they skim along over the broad smooth roads in a way that would exhilarate a mummy. There is no fear of crushing velvets or satins, and you can walk over the lap-robcs half a day if you like without some one shouting, "Be careful, you're on the robe," or, "You'll spoil all that embroidery I did for John." John Thomas has never heard of an embroidered lap-robe, and I dare say he is just as happy as if he had. He is king of the soil, and, if he only knew it, has more leisure and more down-right independence than half the struggling business men in yonder haughty city, to whose streets, like unto those of want and care, he is an absolute and utter stranger.

SISTER PACHITA.

SISTER PACHITA.



It was sunset in the San Luis valley.

He desires no description of these mountain sunsets who has witnessed the divine portrayal on the skies. The heavens become a canvas whose length and breadth is immeasurable, whose delicate tints must put to shame the touch of the greatest masters of the world.

To all fanciful natures there is an indefinite charm in solitude, and 'Chita felt it too in her own mute, untaught way. Poor little 'Chita! —the sun-browned, dark-eyed daughter of the mountains; the child of old Manuel, the ranchero; the prettiest girl in the settlement,

the Americanos said, when the first train had bounded over Veta Pass to Alamosa, and the train-men had caught sight of the girl hanging carelessly to a cluster of shrubbery half-way up the mountain side; a picture of slender grace and native ease. 'Chita had been spell-bound when she had first seen that train career-ing fairly into space over the dizzy heights. It had been a hot night, and when the train stopped on the pass, she had seen numbers of God-like creatures—all Americanos, old Manuel had told her, many of them as blue-eyed and fair-haired, she thought, as the gaudy blonde angels in her mother's old Catholic bible. And they had all seen her—that slender, willowy figure with the little bare brown feet and the soiled toggery of her kind, perched away up there in such quaint relief among the rocks.

All this had happened three years ago; a very great while ago, 'Chita thought. She had been a child then, she was a woman now; and Manuel had brought her a pair of shoes from Alamosa, and she had learned to comb out her long thick hair, and plait it neatly—taught by a lady tourist who had come to the valley to sketch. She had learned to read through the same agency, and 'Chita, now sixteen, and beautiful as a star, was beginning to show signs of restlessness which her parents liked ill indeed. "It was all the shoes' doings," old Manuel said; "she would have them after the Americanos came through with the train," "that abomination of satan," he called it. But old Lisa, her mother, shook her head wisely, affirming that it was more likely to have been the hair-plaiting, as the latter occasioned more peeps in the little cracked mirror over the

chimney-piece than the former could possibly have done.

However all this may have been, certain it was that 'Chita was growing restless in her mountain home, where there was nothing for her to do except tend the garden, which thrived quite as well without tending in that warm southern climate. There was the house, of course—if Manuel's shanty might carry so dignified a name—but any sort of care in that direction old Lisa regarded as pure desecration, and the preparation of the chili-colorado and mutton, was far too serious a task to be entrusted to a child like 'Chita. Her four brothers were out hunting and fishing most of the time, only returning in time to take their share from the unfailing mess in the kettle, and then to curl themselves up in their dingy blankets and sleep perhaps until noon the next day.

Old Manuel tilled a small field, sowing it with his hands, plowing it, as his father had done before him, with the forked limb of a tree, and reaping it with an old scythe that hung just outside the door all the year round.

Why had he not machines to do these things, 'Chita asked. The Americanos said they had them in the north. Could he not find them if he traveled far enough, and so do his work better and more easily.

Manuel answered angrily. What was the matter with 'Chita? Would she turn Americano too, and leave him in his old age, as some of the daughters of the colony had left their parents last year.

"No, she would never do that," she said. She always obeyed her parents implicitly, as much perhaps through superstition as anything else; but she had an instinctive repugnance for

her surroundings, notwithstanding her apparent submission, and she felt to-night, as she mused before the opened door, looking for the coming train and studying the sunset, that her life was very empty and her duties pitifully few. As a newly awakened nature always gropes its way to something better, so in her blind way groped little 'Chita, whose silent yearnings were wholly unintelligible to her people, and not always quite clear to herself. Away in Denver, thousands of miles away she supposed it to be, the Americanos had told her there was a Catholic school for girls, where they were taught all the pretty accomplishments and the exercise of the charities, and where they might become "Sisters" if they liked, and devote their lives to the mission of healing. 'Chita thought of this night and day, but she would never leave her parents while they lived.

When she had thought out all this she would have been less than human if she had not been unhappy. A little knowledge is always such a drop of bitterness in the cup of an ambitious girl, and 'Chita had drank just far enough to taste her helplessness.

Pretty soon the train came sweeping round a great curve, and 'Chita forgot her unhappiness in the joy she always experienced in beholding its symmetry and speed.

"How like a thing of life!" she thought, and it seemed to her a fitting messenger of all the busy, pushing world that lay away below her native hills. There were Dan, the conductor, and Jack, the brakeman, with a half dozen more officials whose faces she had learned to know, hanging about the rear platform, and all nodding and smiling pleasantly at the nut-brown maid whom they were so accus-

tomed to seeing, and who seemed to them the sweetest spirit of all that rugged solitude. 'Chita responded to their salutations with apparent diffidence. Pray, was not Manuel forever warning her against these treacherous Americans? Nevertheless, a fair-complexioned man was a great curiosity to this girl, who had only seen black Jose, the young Mexican who tilled the field adjoining her father's, and her great dark brothers with their swarthy skins and saucy eyes, in all her life before. No wonder, then, that she stole furtive glances at Dan when she thought he was not looking, nor that the warm color leaped into her bright face as he hastily stopped the train, sprang lightly to the ground, and with hat in hand, approached her with as much respect as if she had been the greatest lady in the land.

"'Chita," he said—he had spoken to her

several times in the last three years—"I have a lady on the train who is too sick to go on to Alamosa. I want you to take her to your father's house and care for her until she is better. Will you?"

Would she? The indignation she felt at the question flamed into her face, and made her cheeks warmer than ever. Of course she would, she said, for 'Chita spoke a little English with the prettiest accent in the world. Her diffidence was gone now. She was all interest, and followed Dan to the train ere she was bidden. Two men lifted the sick woman from the car; such a pale, fragile creature she was, with masses of yellow hair, and great dark circles under her violet eyes. A boy followed carrying a pair of satchels, and—how 'Chita's eyes blazed with delight!—a lovely child some four years of age, whose little rosy

face, full of health, made such a pitiful contrast to the pale, delicate one of the invalid who was his mother.

Dan left what he termed a big escort to help 'Chita to the house with the mother and child, and the little Mexican's life-work began that midnight, when the invalid's troubled spirit winged its last long flight from earth, but not until she had exacted a promise from 'Chita to care for little Carl always. He had no friends, she said, unless, unknown to her, his father lived. A dreadful calamity had separated them soon after the child's birth, in the happy fatherland. She had come to the mountains, thinking to strengthen her poor worn-out lungs for the child's sake, but she had come too late. She was going home to God now. Would 'Chita keep the child? Would she promise?

And 'Chita promised, there in the weird

moonlight, while the mountain breezes played about the bed of straw, and the girl, devout always, half thought she could hear the voices of the angels as they came to free the suffering spirit.

In the morning old Manuel and his sons made a lone grave in a secluded spot, over which 'Chita trained sweet wild roses, and where she took the boy often, and taught him to implore Our Lady's blessing for his dead. Strangely enough, old Manuel and Lisa said nothing against 'Chita's keeping the child. She would never marry Jose anyway, they said. He would soon go home to Old Mexico with a broken heart, and their foolish girl's face in his memory forever perhaps, in spite of his long, patient wooing. Let her keep the child; the mutton pot was always boiling, and 'Chita should make clothes for little Carl from the

sheep's wool, which she spun with her own pretty brown hands.

Three long happy years had soon passed away. 'Chita's brothers, long since grown weary of their mountain home, had gone to seek their fortunes in the great world, and one scorching summer a mountain pestilence came along, and took away poor old Manuel and his faithful wife. After this 'Chita's course was plain. There was a purse of gold among the quaint frocks and petticoats of Carl's mother. He had grown a fine boy now, and loved 'Chita as he would never love any one else. She made herself and him as decent as she could, then took the purse of gold, and boarding Dan's swift train, was away to the northward and her long-dreamed of Denver, where, after she had placed Carl at school, as she knew his mother had desired, she joined that army of

angelic women, the very name of whose order is a benediction to sufferers, and became to the world, "Sister Pachita."

Never in her life had she been so happy as now. Healing seemed her mission on earth; ambition tempted her no further. The old restlessness was gone; in ministry she had found peace. She was no longer the timid bird of the mountains. Perhaps the care of the child had developed her character more than anything else would have done, for Sister Pachita was a mature woman at an age when most girls are only children.

When Carl was ten years old, and still at school, there was borne one day into the hospital, a tall, strong man, with every indication of good birth and fortune upon him, from his broad, fair brow to his small delicate hands. He was suffering with fever, was a stranger in

the city, and had been consigned to the hospital by wary hotel people who feared inconveniences. He was just ill enough to be peevish, and from the day he entered the place, refused to take aught from the hands of any one save 'Chita, who, if she had been a kindly child, was a thousand times more kindly now, as she sat by his bedside in her lovely ripening womanhood, pacifying him as best she might, for she saw his malady was of mind, and not of body. There was something vaguely familiar in that broad smooth brow, and the full frank face of the gentleman who was now her constant care. When he spoke, it seemed to her she had heard that voice every day for years, and yet she could trace the likeness to no one. Whom had she known all her life save her swarthy countrymen?

One day Carl came into the hospital on a

hurried mission to "Mamma 'Chita," and as he stood by the bedside of her patient, the better to gain her private ear, a sharp pang shot through her heart, as she saw them, man and boy, together. A swift revelation, which she said afterward, must have come from God, came over her with as much vividness, as if it had been written on the skies in letters of fire.

"He is Carl's father!" she said to herself, for the boy was the image of the man; and then her heart sank within her, as she thought of the probable parting and sacrifice. One day when her patient had been unusually restless, she had told him the story of her boy, thinking to amuse him, and now as the twain gazed at each other, she saw the glad light of recognition in the father's eyes—saw him stretch out his arms for the boy, take him to his heart, and hold him there, but with what a

pang of wounded mother-love!—what a fearful renunciation of all that was dear to her in life! “Come with you? You my papa?” the boy cries in bewilderment. “Perhaps I will come, if you will take Mamma 'Chita too?”

The man smiles and puts the child from him, while he reaches out his hand to the lovely woman who sits in her plain black garb with bowed head, her bright eyes filled with shining tears.

“Sister Pachita,” he says, “Will you be my wife and Carl's mother always?”

But the little hand he seeks does not respond; the head remains bowed, a convulsive sob is her only answer; an answer which he understands only too well, and with a deep groan turns his face from the light to hide his anguish, for this is the love of his mature years, the deep tender passion a man feels for a woman who

has befriended him and his in time of trouble. This was no summer love like that other boyish romance, enacted so long since across the silver sea. Were 'Chita to allow it, she would become the crowning glory of a good man's life, but he knows she is inexorable. See! she fingers her cross, and counts her beads. She implores divine assistance to aid her in resisting the sweetest temptation that ever comes to woman, be she saint or no. Must she give up Carl? Dare she renounce her religion? These questions meet and wage fierce combat in her loyal heart. The old superstition is strong upon her. She tries to throw it off, for Sister Pachita is an intelligent woman as well as a devout one, but it will not down at her bidding. In the sight of God and man she has pledged herself to the holy church, and no saint of olden time was ever truer to those

vows which now lay upon her like so many iron chains. All the peace she has gained in ministry is gone. After all she is but a woman. Her breath comes hard and fast. O! why does the room grow so dark? It seems to her that the very sun in heaven has become extinct—the long rows of white beds take on the semblance of graves, so ghastly they grow in the shadows that enthrall her soul. She sees Carl in his father's arms. It seems to her she is forgotten, forgotten! Already she sees herself an aged woman, bent and broken with years, but still wearing the garb of a "sister," still passionately longing for the child, which is as her own flesh, yet from whom destiny has separated her forever.

And that other separation? That tall strong man who would have gathered her to his heart, and there shielded her from all the storms of

time so long as they both should live—Holy Mother, it is indeed hard that thy tenets are so stubborn, thy vows so binding, that they congeal young life blood, render women childless and loveless, and turn rivers of love into streams of black despair; yet such has been their mission since the beginning of creeds—such the destruction they have always wrought.

Apparently Sister Pachita never swerved or faltered; though her face and lips were the color of ashes, she rose quietly from her seat and threw back the long black veil now made hateful to her for all time. For an instant she let her hand rest within that of the man who might have been her husband; the man who loved her as perhaps not even the angels in heaven would love her in the next world. Darkness was coming upon her again, and after hastily snatching Carl to her bosom, and im-

pressing a burning kiss upon his wondering face, she lowered her veil again, and left the hospital to return to it no more.

Many months they sought her—that stricken man and boy, in the picturesque solitudes of the far West; in that older civilization of the Atlantic sea-board—in the far North, even across the great water, into the old world. Her spirit seemed ever with them. Could it be she had wilfully forsaken them? Ah! how little they dreamed that away off there in her native valley where the heavens are an immortal canvas, and the mountainous solitudes the eternal silences of God, she had wandered back among her people who had buried her on the hillside beside that other unmarked grave, away off there in the South-land when another sunset was upon San Luis Valley.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.



O one will be so busy to-day but he will stop to laugh with a friend over the valentine he has received or is about to dispatch through the mail, as a mark of his affection or an expression of some happy vein of humor. If he is an old man who occupies a prominent position, he will be all the more likely to receive some good-natured comic thing, that will make him shake his fat sides with mirth. If he is a young man he will be sure to receive an indescribable hand-painted something from his lady-love that will make his heart sing for joy all day long. But to the lovely debutante a

valentine means more than it does to any one else. Coming as it does in the very heart of the gray Lenten season, this messenger of love and prophecy is perhaps more welcome than a ball dress or a bank note would be. It has such a delicious air of mystery, and her own room seems such a haven of refuge for its perusal! If she knows the hand-writing on the envelope, her future she thinks, is assured. If the valentine breathes of devotion and constancy, she has no idea that pain or woe can ever betide her. She accepts the faintest intimations on faith, and her existence becomes wholly rose-colored for a period of at least two weeks following the eventful day. She displays her treasure only to her most intimate friend, with strict injunctions, "never to tell anybody." Towards evening she comes down stairs flushed and happy, and so absorbed in

her own pleasant thoughts that she scarcely notices the smile which papa exchanges with mamma, as he passes up his cup the second time. Mamma has her own thoughts too, to-night. It has not been such a very long time, it seems to her, since she received a valentine, and when she glances at the beautiful girl by her side, she can scarcely account for the flight of years.

The Roman girl will sell her Parma violets for fabulous sums to-day; the dark eyes of the little senorita will sparkle with unusual animation, and the great seething mass of humanity will think less of its cares and troubles, because of the innocent merriment of this happy day.

APRIL RAINS.

APRIL RAINS.



HAT a vague, undefined kind of season April weather brings; a season when the exciting pleasures of winter are over, when summer is yet a thing of the future, and the half warm, half chill grey days hang over humanity—a soft, grey curtain of forgetfulness and rest. These calm, queer days are not usually glorified with colorings of hope; they are too misty and uncertain for that. Buoyancy springs principally from warm, clear skies, from opening buds and singing birds. April weather brings no such awakenings. Nor yet is it a time of saddening retrospections.

No one thinks of accomplishing great ends when the heavens are full of weepings, and the sun shines gloriously one hour only to cover himself with frowns and tears the next.

Households are more quiet on these calm, uncertain days; business places are not so thronged; places of amusement are often half deserted. The average American accomplishes little in the rainy season, and if you seek him in his study, his office or his home, you will find him a thousand times more agreeable than you have during the long months of the busy season he has just passed through.

The day is just damp enough to make a sojourn in the house more comfortable than anything else, and you think your friend unusually cordial as you enter his room, which, on account of the rain, is probably not in such painfully good order as you generally find it.

Very likely he has just finished a prowl among old letters and papers, for there is a suspicious untidiness about his escretoire there in the corner, and he luxuriates in the delightful negligence of dressing gown and slippers. You feel at home from the moment you enter the place. The formality which always attends a good weather visit does not exist, and you may elevate your muddy shoes to any height you may see fit, and smoke in perfect bliss.

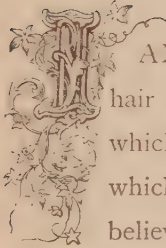
There is a charm about April dampness, a profound calm that summer rains never bring. Unceasing effort rests her weary wings for a brief while, and mortals are left one little space of time to commune with their souls. Worldly cares are quite put to rout, amidst all the grave and quiet serenity which settles down upon everything. Sleep comes unsought. Evil thoughts take to themselves wings. Spring

rains are the harbingers of mental peace; the exponents of that dozy somnolent phase of existence, a taste of which comes often in the light of salvation to those who toil early and late for daily sustenance.



MY VALENTINE.

MY VALENTINE.



I AM an old maid now, with gray hair and wrinkled, care-worn face, which certainly is not beautiful, but which was not wholly unattractive, I believe, twenty years ago. My parents died when I was a child, and I was left to the tender mercies of my aunt, who made me work like a little slave, and never lost an opportunity of telling me how much she was doing for me, and how ill she could afford it. She lived in a small village near St. Louis, and I used to lie awake nights planning how I could elude my dragon-like relative by a flight to that famous city, which I fancied was one brilliant mass of riches and happiness. I had only

one friend in the village, and he the son of the wealthiest and most popular resident, was so far removed from me, in a social way, that I seldom saw him, and when I did, he had to steal into our garden at twilight with the new book or the cake he had generously set apart from his store for his wretched little friend.

He was fourteen years old, as I first remember him; a frank, open-faced, fair-complexioned boy, with roses in his cheeks and happiness in his sparkling blue eyes, and a quick, light step, which often turned into a leap when he wanted to clear any obstacle or when he had reason to make extra haste. We had met at a school picnic once before my mother died, when I had worn a little, clean muslin frock with blue ribbons, and had had my thick, dark hair combed out and curled properly, perhaps the only time during the whole course of my child-

hood. The picnic was a May party, and Frank Fairfield, that was his name, had insisted upon crowning me queen of the fete, though the other girls did not like it, and hung their heads not a little when Frank twisted the apple blossoms in my hair, and proclaimed me sovereign from the top of an infirm old stump, which barely bore our weight until the speech was finished. After that he was always my sworn champion, and stood up for my rights in such a way that I couldn't help loving him. He came to see me when mother died, and stayed so long, mingling his tears with mine, that they sent a servant for him, and then I thought they kept him away, because I didn't see him for months after I went to Aunt Jerusha's. One day, I had been helping with the washing, and my little hands were all bruised and sore, when, happening to go to the door for something, I

saw Frank Fairfield across the street, and heard the well known whistle with which he always called me. The tune was "Take Your Time, Miss Lucy," and I will never forget it to my dying day. I threw on my bonnet and flew across the road, where he stood under an old tree waiting for me.

"I'm afraid you're not well treated, Janey," he said, taking my little red hands in his own soft palms, and looking at them pityingly. "Never mind, I'm going away to school next week, and when I come back I'll be grown a big man. We'll be married then, and I'll take care of you."

A big lump rose in my throat. If Frank went away how could I endure my wretched life? How bear the kicks and cuffs which I daily received, and know I had no friend to aid or sympathise?

"Don't go, Frank," I sobbed; "please don't go and leave me here alone with Aunt Jerusha."

I can never forget, no, not if I live to be a hundred years old, the manly way in which he sought to comfort me, and to reconcile me to the hardness of my lot until we should be grown, and able to go out into the great world together.

"I shall be a great lawyer, Janey," he said, "and you'll ride in your own carriage and wear silks and satins one of these days."

But this promised splendor was small consolation, and I cried myself sick the day I knew Frank was to go away to school. After that it seemed to me my aunt grew more abusive every day, and had it not been for the memory of Frank, I believe I would have swallowed poison and ended my poor wretched existence before it had gone any further. As it

was, I could not do that, and the old plan of flying to the city began to revolve itself in my mind over and over again.

Frank was not allowed to write to any one outside of his family, or his good counsel would probably have put that notion out of my head effectually. I had only my own sad heart to commune with, and the life I led was killing me by inches. One night when my aunt had gone to a neighbor's, and the children were fast asleep, I made my small belongings into a bundle and crept stealthily from the house, out into the clear star-lit night. I took my way across the fields to the station, and, as luck would have it, met no one, and as it was early autumn, slept warmly and unmolestedly beneath a hay-stack, and the next day pursued my way to the city, guided by the friendly sign-boards, with which the country road is

thickly dotted. The distance was not great, and I reached the city the second day at noon, so foot-sore, faint and weary that I can never look upon the poorest tramp without a feeling of the sincerest pity. I will not weary you with a description of that horrible time. I begged, but never stole, and the people who finally befriended me were honest, simple souls, who, if they were not extravagantly generous, were at least possessed of the milk of human kindness, and when I found a home with them I knew I was safe.

Years rolled on, and from my quiet place as household domestic, I drifted into bonnet-making, for which I had much natural taste and became quite an artist in my way. Occasionally I heard from a play-mate in my native village, that Frank had never been home for vacations, that he traveled during the inter-

vals of study, and that he was fast becoming a man and a scholar. At such times my heart beat high, and yet when I realized the difference in our positions in life, a sudden nameless fear took possession of me, for I had not lived all those years in a great city not to have observed the changes which come into men's hearts sometimes. I knew that Frank did not know where I was, and it had always been my desire that he should not know. Once indeed I had endeavored to write to him, but the letter presented such an awkward and blundering appearance that I was glad to throw the tear-stained thing in the fire and go on with my bonnets, those dear mute things which somehow had more sympathy for me than any living thing I encountered in those days. Bonnets were the expressions of my life. If I felt blithe and cheery, the work of my hands came out

in bright warm colors, with plenty of spring roses and an air of gayety and elegance pleasant to behold; if my thoughts dwelt on dismal childhood, I made mourning head-gear, the blackest and most sombre. This occupation was balm to me then, just as it is to-day, for although I have my own room now, my cat on the hearth and my bird in the window, as all old maids have, I believe, I will take to bonnets as naturally as a duck does to water.

Well, one bright morning in late winter, St. Valentine's day in fact, as I was nearing my sixteenth birthday, my mistress gave me a holiday, and having gone out, left me to dispose of it as best I could. The bonnets had been carefully locked up for the day, and as my solace in that direction was thus cut off, I decided to spend the morning in walking about the city, as the weather was bright and sunny—a fore-

runner of those immense spring thaws with which St. Louis people are so well acquainted. As I tied on my sober bonnet more leisurely than usual, I was half startled to see how tall and womanly I had grown, and how my little, pinched childish face had grown round and rosy, and my big eyes full of contentment if not of happiness. Even to myself I was not an unpleasant picture, and I remember experiencing a feeling of exhilaration as I locked the door of the little bonnet shop, and took my way down one of the principal avenues. I remember meeting ever so many groups of young girls on the streets that morning, many of them chattering and laughing over bits of gilded and tinsel paper, which I knew must be valentines. Wandering on in a kind of dreamy mood, I surprised myself greatly by bringing up at the postoffice, where I had been

some few times for my mistress, and had soon taken my place in the eager expectant row, which blocked the way to the general delivery. My turn came at last! Not in the least expecting an affirmative answer, I yet summoned up courage to pronounce my name, and, in so doing, felt perhaps more than I had ever done before that I had at least something in common with other human beings. I waited with a peculiar feeling at my heart, while the clerk drew forth a large lavender envelope which actually contained my name on the back. I had never received a letter before, and I flew home breathless and excited to examine its precious contents. It was an elaborate valentine, and closely entwined with the usual true-lover's knot were the words, "Janey and Frank," written in a clear, manly hand, and over a knot in another corner he had written

"Hope," in a manner too plain to be mistaken. A little motto, containing the words, "Just one year from to-day," fell from the envelope to the floor, and all the rest of the day I sat in a kind of ecstasy of surprise, for I was a very matter-of-fact girl, and not fanciful enough to have built air-castles of any kind.

The next year passed away peacefully, and having had so much hope added to my life, I had grown rosier and taller each day. When the eventful morning of the 14th arrived, I put aside my bonnets, and went early to the post-office, this time to be badly disappointed by receiving nothing.

Slowly turning my foot-steps homeward, I was shocked to perceive a funeral procession moving towards a church which lay in my way, and for some reason I never could explain, I entered and took a seat the sexton gave me by

the door. There was something strangely familiar in the haughty carriages of the elderly couple and the two young ladies who formed the procession. They were in the deepest grief, and seemed to possess the perfect sympathy of the congregation, which I knew was an aristocratic one of the Episcopal persuasion. I seemed riveted to the spot, and sat through the long service, scarcely taking my eyes off the mourners, whom I was sure I had seen before. When the congregation, according to the old style, were invited to pass through the aisles and look at the corpse, I found myself transported to the spot by the same uncanny influence I had felt upon entering the church. The instant my eyes fell upon the proud, young face, now cold in death, I recognized it, knew it was all that remained to earth of my youthful playmate, my early love, my valentine. With

a sharp, low cry I fell prostrate upon the steps of the altar, and when I awoke to consciousness a week later, I was in my own little room, while a kind nurse bent over me and begged me not to distress myself by asking questions.

As time wore on I grew stronger, and was able to resume my work, and few ever knew of my terrible experience that valentine's day. Grief seldom kills, and though I am a lone woman and a saddened one, I think I can humbly say that I have performed many duties during the course of my long life, and that the world has been rendered some little service by my having lived.

THE LADY'S DREAM.

THE LADY'S DREAM.



HE is alone in the moon-light. Her head is dropped upon her hand. A book lies on her lap, but she is not reading.

There are times when even our favorite authors fail to amuse, when their eloquent language seems tame, and their inspired pages forced and unnatural ; when we cannot smile at the drollest conceptions, or weep over incidents the most pathetic. These are the hours of retrospection, and surely they are not without their use.

Oh ! Memory, thou art often a green spot in the desert-lands of Existence. Who shall scoff

when thy cooling zephyrs are wafted across the fevered brain, to which alone thou canst bring succor? Is there not a ten-fold zest added to the pleasures of memory? Think you any mortal state could have been half as joyous as your poor heart, so worn and weary, now pictures it by contrast across the lapse of years? To you, or to the elderly lady, half dozing there by the fire-light, her open book wholly unnoticed on her knee, the march of time is but a vision or a parable.

The wrinkles of age are in her face to-night. The bands of her hair are of a silvery hue; her infirmities increase so rapidly she does not even hear you as you cross the threshold, and take the empty chair there by the fire. Do you know what life she is living to-night? Can you imagine whence that old tender heart is roaming while the fire burns fitfully, and the moon

light is streaming in like a golden flood? 'Tis a winter's eve, but not so in the lady's dream. She thinks of a time when queenly Summer was abroad over the earth, when every leaf and bud and flower were full of warm, happy, healthy life—a day in early June, a cloudless sky, masses of rich crimson berries, and two pairs of hands working among them with so much seeming industry. Ah! those hands, two of them so strong and brown, and two of them—can it be these old shrivelled hands are the same fair dimpled ones she stained with strawberries that day? Bending fondly over her, she sees the fairest, frankest face! How the well-remembered tones thrill into her heart, as she imagines she hears him speak! Surely this is no vision. She is a girl once more, all the long, lonely years, all the bitter doubts and cruel bars are swept away. They are together

once more, in the summer of the year and the spring of their lives, while heaven smiles down upon their pure young love, and all the forest birds sing triumphant anthems of glorious praise. Shone ever the sun so brightly before? Sang ever the birds outside of Eden as they sang that happy, long-ago day? Ah! poor dear lady, was it the intense beauty of your spring, perhaps, that has made your winter so cold, and drear, and desolate?

The hours go on, but she does not move or seem to realize the flight of time. They leave the old garden now, hand in hand, side by side, heart throbbing to heart, but not until they have turned about to take a last farewell of all the smiling verdure in that old south garden. He bends his handsome head to touch her lips, and murmur a wish that this day may be emblematic of their lives. O! gentle lady, would

to God it had been so for your sweet sake. Hand in hand they go out at the old garden gate, up the steep and rugged hill of Life. The path-way is full of stones and briars, but as often as she cries out with pain, just so often does he take her to his bosom, and comfort her. They travel on and on, and after a time God is good to them, and lovely children are sent to them, that their hearts may be for ever cemented in the love that passeth all understanding. Little laughing voices are their's, little tender feet running on before in the journey up the Mountain; little forms gathering new strength and beauty every day; little hearts wherein the parents have new thrones, and are crowned again, just as they crowned each other among the scarlet berries, that never-to-be-forgotten day in the glad long-ago. This is the blessed fruition of a life of love, and now one child has been transformed

into an angel, and a little eager voice cries "Mother, come!" Hark! Did you not hear the echo of that little voice? Can you say that the little dream-child did not call, and that the poor soul there by the fire, who, until to-night has ne'er known aught of love since that summer day, does not respond with a wealth of mother-love, which real mothers never know?

Ah! she is waking. The poor weary head lifts itself heavily from the withered hand; the soft eyes wander aimlessly about the room. She sees the reflection of her haggard face there in the mirror, by the ghastly moonlight. A shudder thrills through her, as she compares its pallor with the roses of the bright young face in the old south garden, and yet it is as though a flood of rich melody had been poured into her sombre room, and all night long she sees the beautiful face of the lovely dream-

child,—it is the same frank, fond face that bent over her among the scarlet berries in the summer of the year and the spring of her life.





